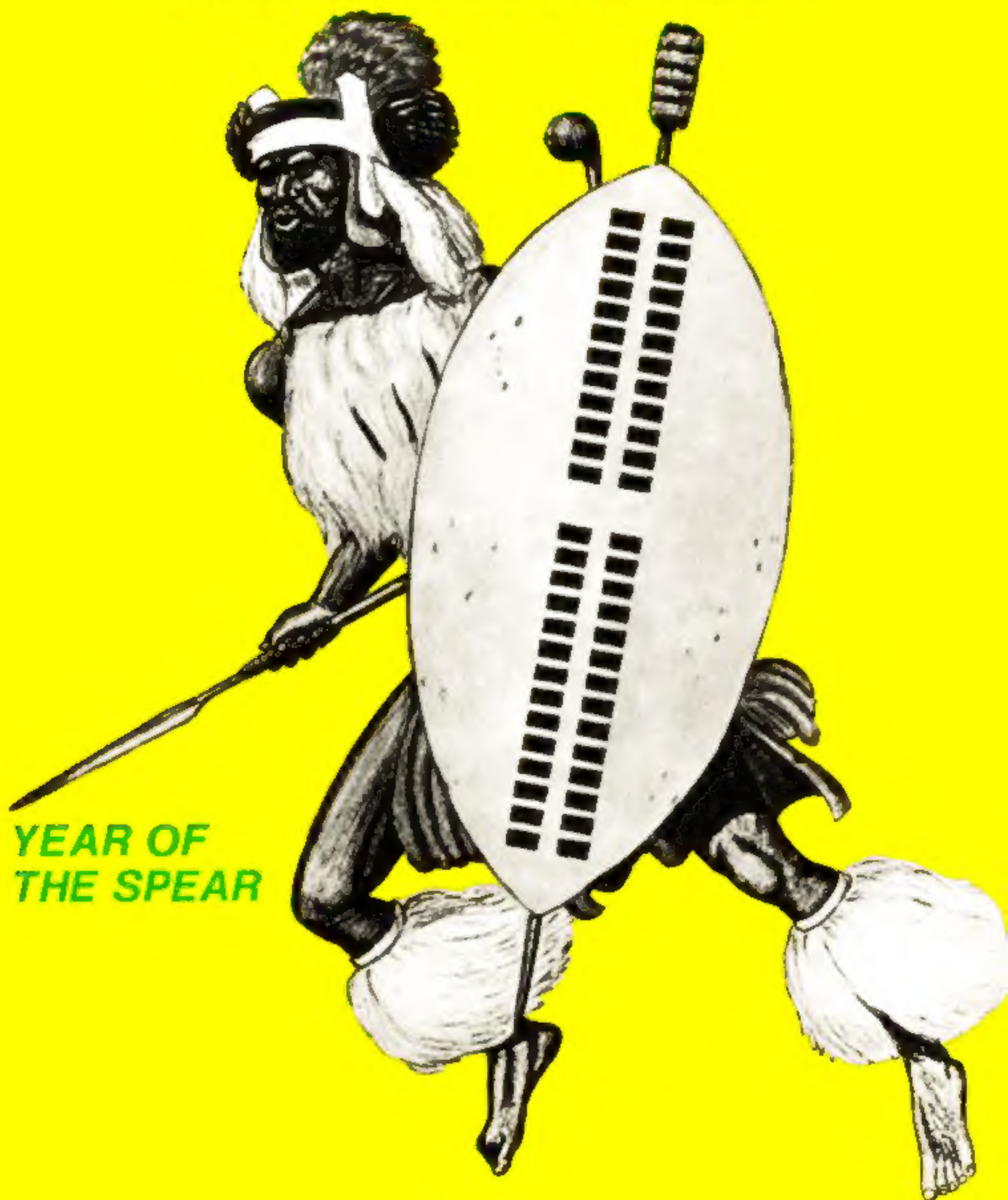


# The African Communist

NO 78 THIRD QUARTER 1979



YEAR OF  
THE SPEAR

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## **THE YEAR OF THE SPEAR**

In this centenary year of the battle of Isandhlwana, the African National Congress has proclaimed 1979 as "The Year of the Spear", and has issued a call to all its members and supporters to intensify all aspects of the struggle for national liberation. Recent developments in Southern Africa have made it necessary to make a serious review of the whole situation in our movement inside and outside the country, and to devise methods of raising the level of our work to new heights. In the reassessment of our past achievements and the setting of new targets we have drawn on the experience of the liberation movement over many years of struggle.

The collapse of the Portuguese empire in 1974 changed the whole balance of forces in favour of the liberation movements in Southern Africa, and opened the way for the growing isolation of the racist

regimes and revolutionary advances by the progressive forces, not only in Africa but throughout the world. The deepening of the general crisis of capitalism and the growing strength and influence of the socialist community have helped to ensure that the initiative passed into the hands of the fighting men and women of our region. It is the combination of these factors, plus the enormous increase of people's power and confidence since the June 1976 Soweto uprising that has led the liberation movement to decide that the centenary of the battle of Isandhlwana in 1979 must be marked by the creation of favourable conditions for further advances.

To match the demand of the times, all sections of the people's movement are required to consolidate their ranks, increase their work load, rededicate themselves to the task of overthrowing the citadels of apartheid, racism and imperialism in Southern Africa. The heroism and courage of the heroes of Isandhlwana must burn anew in the breasts of our freedom fighters; the enemy must be challenged on every possible front. At the same time, confidence must not be allowed to generate carelessness or sloppy methods of work. In the face of the intensified aggression of the racist forces and their agents in Southern Africa, vigilance and the all-round protection of various levels of our struggle must be stepped up. All tendencies which might have a negative effect on the growing strength and capacity of the movement must be identified and ruthlessly combated. The tightening of security and the strengthening of our underground apparatus are major priorities. Special efforts must be directed towards intensifying the isolation of the racist regimes and their puppets nationally and internationally, and weakening the links between our enemies and their imperialist allies.

Let the Year of the Spear be a year of progress and victory for our cause. Let none of us say, at the year's end, "We could have done more". We must do our utmost now — in the spirit of total dedication, service and sacrifice shown by Cetshwayo, Moshoeshe and Sandile, by Mandela, Sisulu, Mbeki and Fischer, and by the numberless and nameless rank and file who have laid down their lives for freedom, justice and national independence, for equal rights for all in the land of their birth.

## **DEATH OF A HERO**

In this year of the spear, the murder by the South African racists of the young freedom fighter Solomon Mahlangu takes on an added significance. Here was a young man swept up in the turmoil following the Soweto uprising of 1976 who was forced to abandon his studies and decided to join the liberation army of Umkhonto we Sizwe and fight for a better life for himself and all his fellow citizens oppressed and hounded by the apartheid laws. After training somewhere in Africa, he was infiltrated back into the country with two comrades on a mission for Umkhonto. Intercepted by the police in Johannesburg, he was involved in a shoot-up in the course of which two whites were killed. One of Solomon's comrades managed to escape, and later claimed that it was he who had fired the fatal bullets. Caught with Solomon Mahlangu was Mandy Motloun, who was eventually found unfit to stand trial because he had sustained extensive brain damage at the hands of the security police. As for Solomon himself, the evidence placed before the court confirmed that he had not been responsible for the deaths of the two whites, but he was nevertheless found guilty of "common purpose" and sentenced to death.

Under South African common law the fact that Solomon Mahlangu himself was not the killer of the two whites could reasonably have been accepted by the judge as a mitigating factor warranting a prison sentence rather than death. It could also have been accepted by the State President as a factor warranting a reprieve. It was certainly a factor which influenced tens of thousands of those in South Africa and throughout the world who supported the call for the exercise of clemency on his behalf. But the racists ignored these mercy pleas. In their eyes Solomon Mahlangu was a killer, a "terrorist", a rebel whom they were determined to liquidate because they could not afford to show "weakness" in the face of the enemy they fear.

The enemy is the liberation movement headed by the African National Congress which is committed to the overthrow of the hated racist regime and the release from oppression and exploitation of the millions of South African citizens who are victimised because their



skins are black. Solomon Mahlangu was a worthy representative of his people and showed in his ordeal the courage and determination which are the guarantee of future victory. In the first place, he chose to fight rather than submit to unendurable tyranny indefinitely prolonged. When captured by the enemy, he displayed the greatest courage under torture by the police. He told the court how he had been assaulted by Captain Cronwright and Lieutenants de Waal and Struwig. He had been advised by a major to make a statement to a magistrate without mentioning the assaults, but refused and was again assaulted. After he had fainted twice, the police said it was time they started "killing me gradually". On several occasions he was grabbed by two policemen and thrown into the air so that he crashed down on to the floor. It was this treatment which inflicted irreversible brain damage on Mandy Motloun, but Solomon Mahlangu survived and was brought to court, where he defiantly pleaded not guilty to the charge of murder and the ancillary charges under the Terrorism and Internal Security Acts which were brought against him. When sentenced to death he gave the ANC salute and shouted "Amandla" to which the audience responded "Ngawethu".

Then followed the heartbreaking months of strain and tension in the death cell, while an unprecedented campaign on his behalf swept the world. In the eyes of all humanity except the racists and their allies, Solomon Mahlangu was a symbol of resistance to evil, and men and women of goodwill everywhere came to his aid — the United Nations and the OAU, governments and leading politicians of east and west, academics and prominent personalities in all walks of life, ordinary men and women everywhere, not least in his own country. But to no avail. On the morning of April 6 — the anniversary of the landing of Van Riebeeck in 1652 — Solomon Mahlangu was taken to the gallows chamber and hanged by the neck until he was dead.

He was not afraid to die. During the last visit allowed to his mother, he told her he had no regrets. "Do not worry about me, but worry about those who are suffering," he said. "My blood will nourish the tree which will bear the fruits of freedom. Tell my people I love them and that they must continue the struggle". The minister who administered the last rites said Solomon Mahlangu had given the ANC salute, stood upright and, smiling, walked tall to the gallows.

## **Men of Violence**

The racist regime's inflexibility in the face of world opinion is a sign of its weakness, not its strength. A regime of gangsters and crooks, as exposed by the Muldergate scandal, the mask of Calvinist hypocrisy stripped from their evil faces, riven by internal conflict and faced with rising pressures at home and abroad, these vile men of violence, whose authority derives from the rape, theft and murder which they used to subdue the land and its peoples in the past 300 years — these men have no use for truth, justice, mercy or compassion. They have emerged from the womb of force, live by force and will die by force, for they acknowledge no other morality.

It is a scandal that it should rest with a man like Vorster, war-time internee and admirer of Hitler and Mussolini, author of the detention without trial laws and the torture and killing of political prisoners, butcher of Soweto, arch-conspirator of Muldergate, a man who should himself face trial for his crimes — that it should rest with him and his co-conspirators whether a young freedom fighter and hero like Solomon Mahlangu should live or die. What right have these hoodlums to prate of law and order — these practitioners of apartheid which has been condemned by the United Nations as a crime against humanity? What right have they to talk of peace when they daily bring race war into the homes of their own people and commit acts of aggression against their neighbours at the cost of hundreds and thousands of lives?

Millions of people throughout the world shared the agony of Mahlangu on the night before his execution, but as Solomon died, a new determination was born in the breast of all who suffered with him to spare no effort until his death was avenged and the crime of his execution expiated. The killing of Solomon Mahlangu, intended by the racists as a "deterrent", had for most of the oppressed the opposite effect. It stilled lingering fear and submission, drove out irresolution and hopes of compromise in the minds of thousands of his compatriots who had not yet enlisted in the freedom army. New battalions of freedom fighters will flock to the standard of Umkhonto to fill the place he left vacant.

Cut down at the beginning of his adult life, Solomon Mahlangu joins the immortal ranks of Mini, Khaba, Khayinga, Peterson and many other freedom fighters who have not flinched in the face of

death, who have given up their lives in the noble cause of liberation. Their courage, determination and inflexible resolve are the guarantee of future victory. No people who can produce men and women of this mould can ever be defeated. In this year of the spear, we salute the people's hero Solomon Mahlangu, and pledge to intensify our efforts in the liberation cause until the enemy is defeated and power is ours. AMANDLA NGAWETHU! MAATLA KE A RONA!

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## **WORKERS FIGHT BACK**

The racist repression of the South African regime has failed to crush the capacity of African mineworkers to resist, as has been demonstrated by the growth of militancy among Africans in the 1920s and onward to the great strike of 1946, and the outbreak of strikes and violence from 1973 to 1976 which resulted in the death of 189 miners and the wounding of 1050. Now once again African miners have demonstrated their bitter resentment against the compound system, colour bar restrictions, job reservation, low wages and the enormous gap between their conditions and those of the white miners.

A recent protest occurred by 4,500 African miners at the new Elandsrand gold mine near Carletonville. It is in this same region that the strike of African miners in September 1973 resulted in the killing of 11 African miners by police gunfire. Added significance is given to the Elandsrand strike by the fact that it took place on the eve of the official opening of the mine by multi-millionaire Harry Oppenheimer, chairman of the Anglo-American Corporation which owns the mine, in the presence of Dr Herman Hart, honorary president of the Deutsche Bank, who had come to South Africa specially for the occasion.

On Tuesday 10th April 800 miners demonstrated and miners drawn from different regions of the Transvaal, Transkei, Natal, Mozambique and Lesotho joined in the protest. This time it was not possible for the racists to ascribe the united action to so-called 'tribal'

hostility. At first the mine officials pretended they didn't know why the protest had taken place, but later they were forced to admit that the miners were demanding redress of real grievances. They called on the workers to select representatives to meet the management and urged the workers to return to work.

At the same time, they called in the police to subdue the workers' united action with tear gas and baton charges. No injuries were reported but two workers were arrested. Damage was done to the buildings in the compounds and to other mine property.

All these events followed a familiar pattern, but with a difference. Instead of arresting and charging the strikers, the management sacked the 800 miners who demonstrated and returned them to their villages. This shocking piece of intimidation coerced the remaining 3,700 miners into returning to work.

African miners and the black population as a whole will not fail to notice the glaring contrast between this treatment and that meted out to the 18,000 white miners, members of the Mineworkers' Union, who at the beginning of March struck work illegally in sympathy with 121 white miners who stopped work at Newmont Mining copper mine at O'okiep, Namaqualand, in protest against the employment of 3 Coloured miners in jobs previously held by whites. O'okiep, near Port Nolloth, is a marginal area mainly inhabited by Coloured people where the local authorities have difficulty in recruiting white labour. Coloured miners are not covered by the job reservation clauses of the Mines and Works Act.

It is clear that the O'okiep strike was a put up job by the Mineworkers' Union to mobilise white racist support against the threatened employment of African workers in skilled jobs, in anticipation of the Wiehahn Commission recommendation. Earlier the general secretary of the Mineworkers' Union Arrie Paulus had told *Die Vaderland* that there would be strikes if Africans were allowed into white mining jobs.

The Chamber of Mines advised the mining companies to sign the men off and then reinstate them on new contracts. This would mean that the white miners would lose their accumulated benefits. Minister of Labour Fanie Botha at first refused to intervene. Thus after a week of striking the white miners, afraid of losing their benefits, returned to work. Only 4,000 white miners on the



Witwatersrand remained on strike. The union tried to negotiate with the Chamber that their members should not lose their benefits, but the Chamber refused to negotiate until all the men were back at their jobs. At this stage Fanie Botha appealed to the mine workers to return to work, which they did.

The striking white miners claim that racialism was not the motive force of their stoppage, which was merely a protest against the employment of cheap labour. This argument was also advanced by the white miners in their 1922 strike and cannot be accepted. There is no evidence that the 3 Coloured workers whose appointment at O'okiep sparked off the strike were accepting lower wages than the whites they replaced. But there is plenty of evidence that the Mineworkers' Union is opposed to black advancement on the mines because it regards it as the beginning of the end of white domination of the labour market. The white miners' strike was a battle for the exclusive right of white workers to a monopoly of preferred jobs.

White miners scabbed and joined the police in beating up African miners in the 1918, 1920, 1946 strikes and opposed the Africans in all their subsequent struggles. The white miners' unions have not raised their voice in protest against the brutal treatment and discrimination inflicted on the African miners by the Chamber of Mines and all the white racist regimes of Botha, Smuts, Hertzog, Malan and Vorster. The white miners have never put up or backed a demand for African workers to receive higher pay and all the fringe benefits they themselves enjoy. Nor have they been willing to provide opportunities for Africans in skilled occupations. Even in the platinum mines of "independent" Bophuthatswana the Mineworkers' Union has refused to train African miners to do skilled work. The president of the Confederation of Labour A.I. Niewoudt has reaffirmed that white workers will "fight to the bitter end for that which belongs to us".

### **Afrikaner Bourgeoisie**

As far as the bosses are concerned, they are interested in employing African workers to undercut white because, South Africa being a capitalist society, all they are interested in is profits. A study of South Africa's social structure reveals that, besides the ordinary contradictions of capitalism, like the contrast between the private

ownership of the means of production and social labour, there are also contradictions resulting from the contrast between an industrial economy and a superstructure taken over from colonialism with built-in rigidities such as the colour bar.

The superstructure is closer to the hereditary estates of feudalism than to the social class structure of mature capitalism. In feudal society people were born into an estate as serfs and remained there for life. The bourgeois revolution was fought against feudalism and in the interests of the rising bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, it was progressive to the extent that it smashed the monopoly privilege of the feudal barons and it had the support of the workers and peasantry. After the revolution, the bourgeoisie turned their guns on the workers as the class struggle took on a new and more urgent dimension.

It is therefore by no means surprising that there should be, in a particular historical context, a limited degree of common interest between the bourgeoisie and the working class against a backward ruling aristocracy which obstructs the growth of an expanding capitalism. It is true that in our situation the bourgeoisie are members of the dominant race and endorse the basic policies of the racist regime. Nevertheless, there are differences over methods, and the interests of the bourgeoisie conflict with those of the regime on issues such as the most efficient use of labour power which would involve the scrapping of the colour bar, the expansion of markets, the attraction of foreign capital and rejection of state restrictions on investments and location of industries. In fact, the regime itself is having second thoughts on some of these issues.

One reason why the outcome of the white miners' strike in March was very different from the civil war of 1922 is that the class structure of the "volk" has radically changed in the intervening years. In 1922 the Afrikaner share of the private economy was less than 5% and its share in mining less than 1%. Today the Afrikaner share of the private economy is at least 25%, and the "volk" dominate the economy through their control of the state and semi-state corporations. In mining the Afrikaans-controlled General Mining conglomeration has been built up into the second biggest mining-industrial complex after Anglo-American. This is one reason why Minister Fanie Botha took the side of the bosses rather than the white

workers in the March strike. And this is one reason why the leaders of the Mineworkers' Union look to the HNP and the "verkrampies" as their most reliable allies in their fight to retain every rampart of white supremacy in industry. The division between "verligtes" and "verkrampies" is largely based on class factors.

It is one of the major objectives of our national democratic revolution that African workers should be trained and have the right and opportunity to take on all jobs. White union leaders now, as in the past, take refuge in the slogan of "equal pay for equal work", but equal pay without equal opportunities is an obvious fraud, and merely entrenches the white workers as the "labour aristocracy" of which Marx wrote and whom Lenin linked with the practice of colonialism. The solution lies in the organisation and struggle of the African workers in the economic and political spheres until they have destroyed the vicious system of race discrimination which at present holds them in thrall. Only when equal rights have been achieved will full unity of black and white workers become a reality.

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## **S. A.'s BOMB THREATENS AFRICA**

The two Bothas — Premier P. W. and Foreign Minister R. F. — have been making a big song and dance in recent months about the "decline of the west" and South Africa's determination to strike out on her own and build up a Southern Africa co-prosperity sphere. Their calls have been echoed by white racist office-holders in Rhodesia and Namibia and by some of their black stooges like Muzorewa. In essence there is nothing new in this line of policy. It was the dream of Cecil Rhodes at the turn of the century, and was in the minds of the framers of the Union constitution in 1910 which made provision for the possible incorporation of the British protectorates. It was a hobby horse of the Nationalist seer Verwoerd, who was convinced it was South Africa's God-given destiny to save the west from moral decadence and black barbarism. It was the thinking behind Vorster's so-called "outward" policy towards black Africa. And now the Bothas have taken over where their predecessors left off.

But if there is nothing new in the general direction of South Africa's Southern Africa policy, the emphasis has changed. For political, economic and strategic reasons, South Africa is inextricably part of the west, and no amount of propaganda on the platteland or in Parliament can alter this fact. Yet there are obvious differences between South Africa and the western powers over strategy and tactics, and it is these to which prominence is now being given.

From the western point of view South Africa's intransigence over the maintenance of the apartheid system threatens the stability of the whole sub-continent and stimulates the forces of revolution. In South African eyes, however, the western proposals for a Southern African settlement can only result in the eventual abandonment of white supremacy, and this in their view is the same thing as capitulation to the forces of revolution. Looking at the post-war world, South Africa can see only a succession of western defeats — in Cuba, Vietnam, Korea, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Iran, Mozambique and Angola — especially Angola, which South Africa invaded with the connivance of the United States, only to be abandoned by the US when the tide of battle turned against her. While South Africa does not doubt western desire to "save Southern Africa from communism", she now has genuine doubts about western ability to do so, and also disagrees about the means by which the job is to be done.

South Africa considers herself well-placed to assert herself as an imperialist power in her own right on the African continent. She controls over two-thirds of the trade of the region south of the equator and has heavy capital investment in most of the territories of Southern Africa. She has the most developed economy in all Africa, and has built up not only a powerful military machine but also an armaments industry to back it up. Above all, it is clear she now has the capacity to manufacture nuclear weapons, and the suggestion has been made that the so-called American "spy-plane" was engaged in monitoring South African developments in the sphere of nuclear weaponry.

It is the arrogance born from this sense of power which makes South Africa now feel confident of her ability to impose her own solution on Southern Africa, to back up the "internal settlements" in Rhodesia and Namibia, to involve herself militarily in defence of



these settlements, and to embark on a calculated programme of aggression against the neighbouring territories of independent Africa. The aims of the Botha regime were set out explicitly in the Defence white paper tabled in Parliament last April "Terrorism", says the white paper, is the primary threat to South Africa "terrorism" backed by the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact powers. South Africa's ability to defend herself against "terrorism" was being prejudiced to an increasing degree by changed western policies.

"Western powers are resorting to a great extent to a selective policy on human rights in order to ingratiate themselves with the Third World, while the Marxist threat is being underestimated"

However, the white paper continues, "the republic's action in South West Africa has, in fact, shown that despite international condemnation, purposeful and positive action can provide important initiative to resist the threat. An important development is that terrorist organisations are beginning to pose a threat to their host countries in Southern Africa. These countries will soon have to choose between peace and development on the one hand, and continued conflict and stagnation on the other. Although the Republic seeks peace, no responsible Government can allow its population to be exposed to terrorism from bases outside its borders".

This is the pattern of development offered by the Botha regime the continued imposition by force of white domination at home, combined with the extension of aggression abroad allegedly to counter "terrorism", but in reality to lay the foundation for the South African brand of imperialism by which she will subdue the sub-continent to her will. And South Africa knows that the west will tolerate her "initiative" because, behind the "ingratiating" words of condemnation, and whatever the reservations about methods, the west shares the objective of the racists to maintain Africa within the imperialist orbit, and has too much to lose to make a break. That is why, when the chips are down, the west continues to protect the racists at the UN, and western co-operation with South Africa continues at all effective levels. Oil, planes, spare parts, technology and know-how continue to flow to South Africa with the full connivance of the west. Despite their differences, South Africa is still

the main ally of imperialism on the African continent, the major force for checking the African revolution.

The implications of the South African policy are too dangerous to be ignored. South African and Rhodesian aggression against the front-line states is on the increase, and in the Defence white paper the Botha regime has made it clear that the target is no longer merely the "terrorist" bases, but the installations and facilities of the front-line states themselves. By "punishing" the front-line states, South Africa hopes to force them to cease to give aid and succour to the liberation movements, to abandon the objective of the OAU and the UN to complete the decolonisation of the African continent.

The escalation of South African aggression threatens not only the liberation movements, not only the peace and security of the front-line states and the independence of Africa, but the maintenance of world peace itself. The South African Parliament last session voted the staggering sum of R2,000 million for defence, plus secret millions more for secret purposes including nuclear development and espionage and subversion on a scale which, as Muldergate exposed, extends beyond the shores of Africa to every continent. If South Africa's imperialist ambitions are not halted, and halted soon, all mankind can become embroiled in a conflict the fuse for which has already been lit in Pretoria.

The cause of liberation in Southern Africa, the burden of which is now being borne by the front-line states, the ANC, SWAPO, the Patriotic Front and our own Communist Party amongst others, must now be raised to a higher level. It should be clear that the extension of South Africa's present policies now threatens all humanity. For their own safety, as well as for the benefit of the oppressed masses of southern Africa, the peoples of the world must join forces to destroy the apartheid regimes of southern Africa before the fires they are stoking get out of hand.

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# **"FALLEN AMONG LIBERALS"**

*An Ideology of Black Consciousness Examined*

**by Toussaint**

It is less than two years since Steve Biko died at the hands of South Africa's security police in a case which aroused world-wide public attention. In the aftermath of his killing, there has emerged a spate of books and articles about the man, his ideas, and the ideology of Black Consciousness, of which he was a consistent South African exponent. It is perhaps as much a commentary on the world of publishing as it is on the state of South Africa, that it required his brutal torture and death for his ideas to be raised from the comparative obscurity of South African student forums to world-wide attention.

Now that they have been so widely publicised, the ideas themselves need to be critically considered and assessed. Biko, one of the most articulate spokesmen for Black Consciousness, was not by any means its only spokesman; nor do his ideas necessarily reflect the only, or the main current of opinion in that diffuse South African ideology of the past ten years. 'Black Consciousness' is more of an all-embracing

general outlook than a precisely formulated ideology. And the ideas of Steve Biko therefore are not *the* ideology of South Africa's 'Black Consciousness' movement, but *an* ideology.

It is a matter of debate whether his is the most significant or even the most widely supported current in the Black Consciousness camp. But it is certainly the most widely publicised and fully documented; and it is for this reason that it can be carefully appraised, when other trends within the Black Consciousness umbrella, perhaps more radical, and popular, or destined to be more significant in the South African future remain in the silence of South Africa's apartheid and police-ridden echo chamber, from which only the most violent sounds escape to the outer world.

The Biko literature varies. The most publicised – Donald Woods' own account of his relations with Biko – contains little documentary evidence of Biko's own thinking except what is published more fully elsewhere. It contains much second-hand account of things Biko is said to have said in the presence of Woods. For these there is, so far as one can judge, only Woods' recollections – there is no reference in his book to notes made at the time; and since such recollections may well be faulty due to the lapse of time, or even be unconsciously distorted by the selective memory of the writer, I have ignored them in this article.

Hilda Bernstein's booklet published by Defence and Aid, concentrates mainly on unravelling the records of the inquest court on the murder of Biko, its circumstances and those responsible. It uses some of the documents available elsewhere for a short account of Biko's ideas, and usefully shows their indebtedness to earlier nationalist ideology, in particular that of Anton Lembede of the African National Congress Youth League some forty years earlier.

*The Testimony of Steve Biko*, edited by M. Arnold for Granada Publishing, is a verbatim record of Biko's evidence for the defence in the 1976 trial of nine leaders of two front-running organisations in the Black Consciousness field – the South African Students' Organisation (SASO), and the Black People's Convention (BPC). As with any court record, the ideas come across in a fragmented and stilted question-and answer form, often hard to comprehend without the tone of voice in which they were delivered, and often in unfinished, hurried and badly expressed sentences. The testimony,



none the less, covers ground not covered by other documentary records, in particular the working out of Biko's ideology in problems of practical daily political concern as distinct from generalised political philosophy.

Finally *Steve Biko I write what I like* is a collection of Biko's own writings assembled by Father Alfred Stubbs CR, an Anglican priest who knew Biko personally and adds a personal memoir to the anthology. This is the best collection of Biko's own ideas, and I have used it extensively in what follows.

The most complete expression of Biko's concepts of 'Black Consciousness' is the series of articles written by him for various issues of the *SASO Newsletter* in 1970. The title of the series 'I write what I like' appeared under the pseudonym of 'Frank Talk', which he claimed quite categorically in evidence at the 1976 trial to be his own. It would perhaps be expected that the first article in a series devoted to the ideology which sets Black Consciousness apart from other South African thinking would concern itself with the place of blacks in South African society – from perhaps a social or economic or political basis. But in fact Biko's first article is concerned not with an exposition of the position of the blacks, but with a fierce critique of the stance of white liberals. A surprising start; and yet not without reason, for Biko's philosophy appears to spring in fact from a bitter disenchantment with white liberals, with the stress on *white*, because his disenchantment is not with white *liberals* so much as with *white* liberals.

"We are concerned with that curious bunch of non-conformists who explain their participation (in the privileges of white South Africa. . . T) in negative terms: that bunch of do-gooders that goes under all sorts of names – liberals leftists etc . . . The white liberals always knew what was good for the blacks and told them so . . . Nowhere is the arrogance of the liberal ideology demonstrated so well as in their insistence that the problems of the country can only be solved by a bilateral approach involving both black and white."

The main thrust of Biko's articles in this series is to drive home the lesson that, if blacks are to assert themselves in South Africa, they must turn away from the liberal trap of integration with whites, and build their own sense of self as blacks.

"As long as blacks are suffering from an inferiority complex . . . a result of 300 years of deliberate oppression, denigration and derision . . . they will

be useless as co architects of a normal society . . . Hence what is necessary as a prelude to anything else that may come is a very strong grass-roots build-up of black consciousness such that blacks can learn to assert themselves and stake their rightful claim.

The idea is not new. In South Africa itself, in varying forms, it has been put forward for a long time — by those who founded the first black organisations such as the African National Congress, and more forcefully by the ANC Youth League in the 1940's under the leadership of Anton Lembede, and later yet by the Pan Africanist Congress. Abroad the idea has been given wide credence not only by the American black liberation movements, but also by the writings of Fanon, Cesaire and others.

### **A Tiny Sect**

But why, in propounding this philosophy in 1970, does Biko turn his main attack against *liberals*? Anyone not conversant with the South African scene might assume that South African liberals have been a vigorous and campaigning group, forcefully putting forward their own philosophy of black-white integration and winning over to it the black masses — or at least that part of the black masses which has become socially and politically aware.

The reality is however much different. South African liberals have always been a tiny sect, and liberalism a tiny minority current of thinking confined almost exclusively to a small minority within the white minority. Its impact if any on the thinking of blacks was always small — even in its hey-day when liberal opinion was organised in a legally operating Liberal Party, with membership and branches in both black and white residential areas.

But even *that* small outgrowth of liberalism foundered before the hostility of the repressive apartheid state; the Party was dissolved, its small influence fragmented and scattered, its leading voices silenced or muted by exile, and weighed down with a heavy air of despondency and pessimism for the future. It is scarcely credible that such a puny, withering force could have fathered an important current of social-political opinion amongst those most remote from its tiny influence — the black youth of the cities. If, against all the propaganda of the South African state opposing integration of the races, against all the separationist teachings of Bantu Education and

Dutch Reformed Church, against all the ever deepening legal divide between black and white — if against all *this* integrationist ideas still persist amongst the black youth, another explanation must be found for it. The influence of liberals and liberalism just won't do.

One looks in vain in the writings of Biko for any other glimmer of explanation. But again and again he returns to this single explanation — integration is the baited hook set by the liberals, which the blacks have swallowed. In place of a balanced and objective attempt to explain how this came about, he provides only a bitter critique of the emptiness of South African liberalism, illustrating both the unlikeliness of his own thesis and the depth of the personal anger which partly accounts for it. Integration — that is to say, common organisation of black and white — we are told is

“ . . . a one-way course with the whites doing all the talking the blacks the listening . . . almost always unproductive. The participants waste a lot of time in an internal sort of mudslinging designed to prove that A is more of a liberal than B . . . . The black-white circles are almost always a creation of white liberals . . . they call a few ‘intelligent and articulate’ blacks to ‘come round for tea at home’, where all present can ask each other the same old hackneyed question ‘how can we bring about change in South Africa?’ The more such tea-parties one calls, the more of a liberal he is . . . .”

And so on, to the point of tedium.

Perhaps in these taunts there is an element of truth. That would depend on precisely what and who Biko refers to in his dismissive catch-all phrase: ‘ . . . that curious bunch of non-conformists . . . that bunch of do-gooders that goes under all sorts of names liberals, leftists etc.’

But whomover he refers to, the fact remains; their influence in shaping the consciousness and the actions of South African blacks and whites has been minimal. Why then elevate it to the forefront of the ideological argument? Why omit from all reckoning the influence which more than fifty years of political teaching and action by the African National Congress has left upon people's consciousness? Why disregard entirely the vast wealth of life's experience which our people have derived not from ‘tea parties at home’ but from joint struggles — peaceful and violent?

Biko's argument is that integration of the races is a trap, that it enables white participants to salve their uneasy consciences without

losing any of their white privileges, and at the same time prevents the black participants from asserting themselves. Perhaps so, if the reference is to those "tea-parties at home" type of liberals only. But what of other attempts at integration — the non-liberal attempts, the radical attempts made for example by the African National Congress to build up an alliance with independent white organisation in what came to be called 'The Congress Alliance'? Or the attempts made by black trade unions to break through the colour-bar in the Trade Union Council and gain an equal affiliation with whites? Or the most radical — and long-lasting — example of racial integration achieved and maintained for over fifty years by the Communist Party? On all this, Biko is silent. His concern remains with those 'tea-party' liberals. But why? Because through those polite at-homes they emasculated those African nationalists who attended? But who attended? How significant was that influence when measured against everything else that was happening in the country?

### **Liberation Defined**

And what in fact is (or was) 'liberalism' — not in its deep philosophical meaning, but in its practical daily interventions in South Africa's politics? What actually distinguishes these 'liberals' from, say, radicals, or revolutionaries, or just plain conservatives? It is not simply that they seek a more just or fair or caring society, for so do most of the others; nor is it that they believe in the democratic process, for so too do the others. Among the strong tenets of faith of South Africans seeking change, the one which seems to me most completely that of the liberals is the belief that education can cure all the country's ills; that if black standards of education (and thus of 'culture') could be raised to equal those of whites, then the white South African prejudice against having blacks as neighbours, voters, members of parliament or friends would disappear. Where radicals put the abolition of the colour bar as the first step in the process of reforming South Africa and South African education, liberals put educational reform as the first step in the abolition of the colour bar. For them the products of education — thinking and ideas — are everything; institutions and social structures derive from ideas and will be changed by ideas. The starting point of change is therefore to be found in ideas.



There is a strong echo of this in everything Biko writes. For him too the starting point of social change and social institutions is not to be sought in the condition of society itself, but in its ideas.

"All in all the black man has become a shell, a shadow of a man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity. . . . The only vehicle for change are these people who have lost their personality. The first step therefore is to make the black man come to himself, to pump back life into his empty shell, to infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth. This is what we mean by an inward-looking process. This is the definition of 'Black Consciousness.' "

Where white liberals believe in universal education as the great leveller, Biko believes in black re-education.

"The philosophy of black Consciousness, therefore, expresses group pride and the determination by the blacks to rise and attain the envisaged self. At the heart of this kind of thinking is the realisation by the blacks that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed."

For all his scorn of white liberals, liberalism penetrated deep into Biko's own thinking; for him too the idea is the starting point of everything — the only idea must be the Black Consciousness idea. Social change follows the idea.

Thus the paradox — that Biko's assault on white liberalism starts from the premise of liberalism, albeit black liberalism. Once this paradox is grasped, his whole diffuse philosophy begins to slot into place. It is, in almost every detail, an exposition of liberalism — but from a new angle for South Africa — the angle of a black liberal. Throughout, consciousness, thinking, ideas are what is important, the material basis of society secondary, almost unimportant.

Look, for example, at his interesting, often original and thought-provoking writing on the differences between African and European cultural and social patterns.

"Africans always believed in having many villages with a controllable number of people rather than the reverse. This obviously was a

requirement to suit the needs of a community-based and man-centred society. Hence most things were owned jointly by the group, for instance there was no such thing as individual ownership. . . . Poverty was a foreign concept."

Society, clearly, is seen as being determined by its own ideas and beliefs. Where ideas and beliefs themselves spring from, how they are themselves arrived at, is not to be examined; for in the beginning is the idea. And so, logically, the new ideas of Black Consciousness which he himself is expounding, also arise nebulously in the mind, not from the substance of African life or South African society; its source is to be found in a replacement in the mind of those other ideas of white liberalism which preceded them — a sort of disembodied, rotating consciousness, in which white liberalism grows out of mental disenchantment with white conservatism, black consciousness out of disenchantment with white liberalism.

### **The Economic Base**

The thread can be followed through all his work. Liberalism, for example, has nothing very profound to say about the economic character of society; fundamentally it accepts the system of capitalism and private enterprise as either the 'natural' and thus mysteriously pre-ordained system which is unchallengeable; or as the best — and therefore — unchallengeable system. Liberal thinking on the economy, therefore, has concerned itself constantly with 'ironing out' some of the worst inequalities and injustices of the economic order, with finding fairer, less oppressive ways of operating the economic order — never with fundamentally changing it. Biko follows strictly in this path — but with a black-oriented twist to his critique of the economy, and to his proposals for bettering it:

"Being part of an objective society in which we are often the direct objects of exploitation, we need to evolve a strategy towards our economic situation. We are aware that blacks are still colonised within the borders of South Africa. Their cheap labour has helped to make South Africa what it is today — Capitalistic exploitative tendencies, coupled with the overt arrogance of white racism, have conspired against us. . . . We need to take another look at how best to use our economic power, little as it may seem to be. We must seriously examine the possibility of establishing

black business co-operatives. . . . We should think along such lines as the 'buy black' campaign once suggested in Johannesburg, and establish our own banks for the benefit of the community. Organisational development amongst blacks has only been low because we have allowed it to be."

Only! In this trite return to the concept that what we are reflects what we think, all the reality of South Africa disappears – all the historical process of white conquest and black subjection, of capitalist exploitation and black suppression.

It is probably unfair to suggest that there are no deeper economic ideas than these to be found in Biko's writings. But the clearest expression of his generalised thinking on the South African economy and its future is not in a written work but in his evidence for the defence of the nine accused in the SASO trial.

"I think there is no running away from the fact that now in South Africa there is such an ill distribution of wealth that any form of political freedom which does not touch on proper distribution of wealth will be meaningless. The whites have locked up within a small minority of themselves the greater proportion of a country's wealth. . . . So for meaningful change to appear there needs to be an attempt at reorganising the whole economic pattern and economic policies; . . . BPC believes in a judicious blending of private enterprise which is highly diminished, and state participation in industry and commerce, especially in industries like mining . . . like forestry, and of course complete ownership of land. Now in that kind of judicious blending of the two systems we hope to arrive at a more equitable distribution of wealth."

Perhaps this is not the full and forthright exposition of his views which he might have given had he not been in the witness box, conscious that everything he had to say could prejudice the future of his nine colleagues. Perhaps it is a statement of only that which he thought could wisely be said at that moment. But yet it is fully in step with the whole nature of his thinking; and it is completely in line with standard liberal thinking. Not quite the same, perhaps, as that which has been consistently advocated by white South African liberals. But a black-shaded version of it. So that the two sets of opinions complement each other and yet appear to stand in opposition to each other, in much the way that 'heads' and 'tails' oppose each other in any single coin.

## Ways and Means

One can trace the liberal line through many different subjects in Biko's writings. But perhaps the most important of them for the prospects of social and political change in South Africa relate to the central problem of *how* to bring about change. This, as he says, dominated those polite liberal tea-parties. But it dominates, in fact, *all* serious thinking about the future, be it liberal or any other. To create ideal societies in the mind – blueprints for the South African utopia of tomorrow – is a futile and ultimately destructive process if it is not tethered to real life by the disclosure of means to bring it about. *How* to change South Africa? If there is, on this matter, a discernible liberal current it is a negative rather than a positive current: *not* by violence, *not* by law-breaking; *not* by mass struggle. Starting from these prohibitions, liberalism has in practice been reduced to accepting that the only answer to the question 'How to change?' is, through re-educating the public and through legal, parliamentary-electoral activity. It has in fact been their very refusal to accept extra-parliamentary action, or violent or mass law-breaking action, which has stood as a barrier between white liberals and the whole of the black liberation movement for many years.

Biko cannot fail to recognise this barrier – that what is the only acceptable action for white liberals is an impasse for blacks. And yet he remains imprisoned by his own liberal philosophy, unable to break through the barrier or to resolve its contradictions. And so what he has to say on this fundamental aspect of South Africa's real future is vague, unsure, tentative.

"Ground for a revolution is always fertile in the presence of absolute destitution. At some stage one can foresee a situation where black people will feel they have nothing to live for and will shout unto their God 'Thy will be done.' "

Is this a prophecy of despondency, of gloom and pessimism? Standing by itself, the meaning of this statement would be hard to interpret. Nor is it made any easier by Biko's own interpretation.

"What happens at that stage depends largely on what happens in the intervening period. 'Black Consciousness' therefore seeks to give positivity in the outlook of the black people to their problems. It seeks to channel the pent-up forces of the angry black masses to meaningful and directional opposition basing its entire struggle on the realities of the

situation. It wants to ensure a singularity of purpose in the minds of the black people, and to make possible total involvement of the masses in a struggle essentially theirs."

It is impossible to distil any precise meaning from this — any real answer to the question 'How?'. One has to search through his other statements to try and cast light on the obscurities. One finds, again in his first 'Frank Talk' the easy answer: Change their ideas

"The only vehicle for change are these (black-T.) people who have lost their personality. The first step therefore is to make the black man come to himself, to pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth."

In his next 'Frank Talk' he gropes for a way through the liberal philosophy to find an acceptable form of political struggle. He sees that participation by blacks in the institutions set up by the apartheid state for them — the Bantustan authorities and the Bantu Urban Councils, the Coloured and Indian Representative Councils — is a fatal trap.

"I completely discourage the movement of people from the left to join the institutions of apartheid. . . . The longer the Labour Party stay in the CRC, the more they risk being irrelevant. 'Pull out and do what?' this is the next question. There is a lot of community work that needs to be done in promoting a spirit of self reliance and black consciousness among all black people in South Africa."

But beyond that — nothing. If in the beginning there was only the idea, in the end too there is still the idea and only the idea. One has to turn again to his testimony in the SASO case for anything more specific in answer to the question 'How?' Here, understandably, counsel for the defence and witness Biko pick their way carefully through a minefield; a South African courtroom is not the place for 'Frank Talk' — least of all on the subject of political struggle against the government. The court is discussing a BPC document which says that 'No confrontation shall be sought with the oppressing party. . . ." Counsel for the defence refers to the Defiance Campaign, when volunteers from the African National and Indian Congresses deliberately broke apartheid laws and courted mass arrest.



*Biko.* We don't seek confrontation in that sense.

*Counsel* And why not, if you don't mind a blunt question?

*Biko.* I think there were several reasons. . . but basically confrontation has got a self-destructive content in it, in that side issues become main issues. Although your main thrust was a protest, let us say against apartheid, and you go and sit on benches and you get arrested, then a whole lot of trials will come up . . . and you are to argue your way out of sitting on benches, then sitting on benches becomes the main issue, whereas in fact your protest was against the very existence of apartheid

And again, in reference to the 1976 students' protests in Soweto, in which students took to the streets in the face of repeated shootings and terrorism by the police:

*Question* Do you believe that by these means you will bring about a real change in this society?

*Biko.* I see this only as one form . . . It depends entirely on the degree to which the Nationalist government is prepared to hold on to power and fight with their backs to the wall. Conflict could only be avoidable if they were prepared to avoid it. . . But there are people . . . and there are many people . . . who have despaired of the efficacy of non violence as a method. They are of the view that the present Nationalist government can only be unseated by people operating a military wing. I don't know if this is the final answer. I think in the end there is going to be a totality of the effect of a number of change agencies. . . Whether this is going to be through the form of conflict or not will be dictated by the future. I don't believe for a moment that we are going to willingly drop our beliefs in the non-violent stance . . . as of now. But I can't predict what will happen in the future, inasmuch as I can't predict what the enemy is going to do in the future.

## **The Classic Dilemma**

It is, in its way, a classical statement of the dilemma of the liberal in South Africa . . . unable to accept or condone violence as a means of change, and yet unable to escape the certainty that the ruling class will, in the end, always resort to violence to maintain things unchanged. Thus, liberalism sees, and unwillingly accepts, that the state holds the decision in its own hands, and will dispose the issue, because it is unacceptable that the opposition steps outside the bounds of 'acceptable' forms of political action - peaceable, parliamentary.

Thus liberalism stands eternally not in the forefront of history, but on the sidelines; not making changes in the social order, but wringing its hands in impotence and bewailing the injustice of it all. Black liberalism no less than white. Compared with the forthright radicalism of the national liberation movement, developed in depth both in the realm of ideas and in the fields of action by the African National Congress and the Communist Party, it is a puny and inadequate ideology indeed – even when given a radical-sounding cloak of 'Black Consciousness.' This liberal ideology wrapped around in Black Consciousness is a latecomer on the South African scene. But for all that, it is not new. In the ideology of Biko at least, it is but a variant of an old ideology espoused variously by Rheinallt-Jones and Hofmeyr, Paton and Ballinger – an ideology tried, tested, found wanting and long since rejected by the conscious blacks as a dead-end in the road to change, leading nowhere but to pessimism and defeat.

Biko may well have developed – as did so many in the ANC Youth League – to the point where he recognised the limitations of this liberal thinking, refused to sink back in defeatism, and joined the ranks of those who accept, in Engels' phrase, that freedom is the recognition of necessity, that mass action possibly or even inevitably involving violence is the only way to break the power of the apartheid state. But he was cut down in the prime of his youth by a ruthless enemy who perhaps realised in him the capacity for change, the capacity for leadership on a new and more purposeful path of resistance. We still hope to see in the ranks of the resistance many of those who followed his lead and who come to realise, as he may have done, that the path he was following led to a dead end. In fact some of his former followers are serving in Umkhonto we Sizwe right now.

## **APARTHEID LEADS TO MASS UNEMPLOYMENT**

# **JOBLESS MILLIONS BANISHED TO BANTUSTANS**

by Joe Kennelly

Unemployment in South Africa is currently higher than at any time in its history — around 2.3 million<sup>1</sup> (22%) and growing by some 470 a day<sup>2</sup>. Private local surveys have found unemployment rates of 19% among Africans in Cape Town, 24% in Pretoria and 29% in Johannesburg and the Reef. Rural bantustan estimates range from 16% in Saulspoort, Bophutatswana, to 42% in Limehill, Kwazulu<sup>3</sup>. In the Ciskei's main industrial town of Dimbaza, *1,500 persons out of the town's adult population of 6,300 were recently reported as applying for one advertised job*<sup>4</sup>.

Official statistics on African unemployment are thoroughly unreliable. The Department of Labour provides detailed records of unemployed whites, Coloureds and Asians, but estimates of African unemployment, based on sample surveys, regard as unemployed *only those working less than five hours a week*, and ignore widespread underemployment.

This means that someone who has worked for, say, only six hours,

in a week will be classified, not as unemployed, *but as a fully-employed worker*. As a result of such distortions, the regime was able to claim an official African unemployment figure of only 554,000 for April 1978 – a total which, South Africa's big business organ the *Financial Mail* commented, "few experts are likely to take seriously."<sup>5</sup> The regime's statistics will become progressively more misleading as more bantustans become "independent." Already the Transkei and Bophutatswana, for instance, are excluded from official South African unemployment figures.

By converting underemployed seasonal workers on white farms, and those engaged in subsistence agriculture in the bantustans, to full-time job equivalents<sup>6</sup> (e.g. eight persons working ten hours a week each (80 man hours) equals two fully-employed workers (40 hours each) plus six unemployed), the University of Natal economist Charles Simkins has demonstrated the enormity of black underemployment and poverty. His findings estimate that total unemployment rose from 1.24 million in 1960 (18%) to 2.3 million in 1977 (22%) – never falling below 17% of the economically active population. Even in the "boom" years 1960-1969, the rate of unemployment averaged 19%.<sup>7</sup>

The black masses – and Africans in particular – constitute the overwhelming bulk of the total jobless. Although Africans constituted 71% of the economically active population, Simkins calculated they made up over 89% of total unemployment in both 1970 and 1975, Coloureds and Asians making up all but 5% of the remainder.<sup>8</sup> Assuming that the African proportion of the unemployment total has remained at around 89%, then African unemployment in 1977 was around 2 million of the 2.3 million total *some 28% of the economically active African population*.

Mass unemployment in South Africa is, therefore, far from being a *cyclical* phenomenon – something which manifests itself in times of recession and dwindles when the economy is in boom. Even in the period 1960-1969, when the economy was growing by nearly 6% a year, it managed only to stabilise the unemployment rate, but the numbers out of work grew by 350,000.<sup>9</sup> *Unemployment in South Africa is a permanent product of apartheid* – of an exploitative system designed to ensure political supremacy and maximum economic prosperity to a small white minority.

### **Apartheid to blame**

Land wars of dispossession during the last century, the poll tax system and the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 generated a vast landless proletariat, divorced from the means of subsistence and owning nothing but its labour power. The migrant labour system, pass laws and political and trade union repression have since ensured that this labour stays plentiful and cheap. At the same time, industrial colour bars have kept skilled jobs the reserve of a small, artificially-expensive white work-force; consequently, the supply of skilled labour is kept artificially short.

This shortage has been exacerbated by recent zero net immigration figures and a continuing fall in the white birthrate (expected to be 1% by 1980, compared with almost double that figure just four years ago). A manpower survey by the Department of Labour in April 1977 reported a shortage of 49,507 white workers outside of agriculture. They included 12,451 professional and technical workers, 1,375 managers, 4,586 clerks, 4,559 operatives and 9,983 artisans.<sup>10</sup> And the Stellenbosch Bureau for Economic Research recently reported that the number of firms surveyed with skilled labour bottlenecks had risen from 33% in the first quarter of 1977 to 41% by September 1978 — despite three and a half years of comparative economic stagnation.<sup>11</sup> Even Minister of Labour Fanie Botha has admitted that the shortage of skilled labour will reach 21% by 1980. By 1990, he said, there would be a shortage of 1.4 million office workers, 180,000 technical and professional staff and 758,000 workers in the skilled and semi-skilled categories.<sup>12</sup>

Skilled labour bottlenecks and highly expensive white labour have resulted in employers steadily replacing skilled labour with machinery, imported from developed highly-industrialised countries where the object is to save labour. In the process, however, the numbers of semi-skilled and unskilled workers required have inevitably been reduced as well. Apart from alleviating the skilled labour bottleneck, mechanisation reduces labour costs by decreasing the number of workers required and by keeping the wages of the remaining workers low by ensuring that they are in abundant supply. Production is also speeded up and the turnover time of capital accelerated.

Figures issued by the SA Reserve Bank show that the technical



composition of capital in South Africa has been growing markedly during the 1970s, encouraged by government tax rebates of between 30-65% of the cost of the equipment. Between 1971 and 1977 the average value of capital equipment operated by each worker in the non-agricultural sectors of the economy grew in real terms from about R640 to R800.<sup>13</sup> One study of the manufacturing industry between 1946 and 1972 concludes that increased mechanisation was associated, not with rising unskilled wages, but with rises in the wages of skilled (i.e. white) workers. In the period 1946 to 1955, for instance, when the ratio of mechanisation to labour in the manufacturing industry rose by an average of 3.7% a year, wages of Africans in the industry actually fell, but white wages rose by 2.7% a year.<sup>14</sup>

If under capitalism mechanisation retards the growth of employment and increases unemployment, the industrial colour bars of apartheid slow down the growth rate even further, and push the burden of unemployment on to the backs of voteless blacks.

Industrial colour bars are maintained in a number of ways: by legislation, private agreements between registered trade unions and employers and by unequal education and training facilities.

### **Legislation**

The most obvious (but the least important) legislative colour bar is Section 77 of the Industrial Conciliation Act, under which the Minister of Labour may reserve certain jobs for specific race groups (usually whites). Determinations under Section 77, however, apply in relatively few instances, as the regime generally prefers, whenever possible, to have the question of job reservation decided by agreements between employers and the registered unions (i.e. unions which exclude Africans). As well as being more practical, this allows the regime to disclaim responsibility for the colour bar in employment.

In October 1978 the Minister of Labour said that with 18 determinations withdrawn and two suspended, less than 1% of the labour force was affected by the five remaining determinations.<sup>15</sup> This was hailed as the end of job reservation, although only a small percentage of workers were directly affected by these determinations – the vast majority of Africans being kept out of higher-skilled and

better-paid jobs by other means.

Among these other means are the Bantu Building Workers Act and the Mines and Works Act, which exclude Africans from working as artisans in the building trade (other than in the bantustans and African townships) and from skilled jobs on the mines. The 1977 manpower survey listed 1,606 vacancies for building artisans – all of which Africans were prevented from filling, solely because of their colour.

The industrial colour bar is far wider than those laws which prevent Africans from filling skilled jobs. It consists of all measures which restrict the labour market and boost unemployment solely on racial grounds.

The two most ruthless and far-reaching of these are the Environment Planning Act and the pass laws.

Part of the regime's "decentralisation" policy, the Environment Planning Act restricts the growth of African employment in certain urban areas of the country. Industrialists have to obtain permission for an increase in their African work-force, or for the ratio of African to other workers to rise above a certain level. This ratio has been steadily narrowed since the Act's promulgation in 1967. For the clothing industry in the Transvaal it was narrowed from two and a half blacks to one white worker in 1968, to two blacks to one white in 1971. From 1973 the ratio was again narrowed, to one and a half black workers to one white worker.

The aim of the legislation is to force labour-intensive industries to move to the border areas near the bantustans, and to cut the numbers of black workers in the urban areas. However, the effect has been that many smaller factories lacking the capital to move have had to close down. In November 1978 the general secretary of the Garment Workers Union, Dr Anna Scheepers, warned that the clothing industry in the Transvaal was being "throttled to death" by the Act.<sup>16</sup> It also indirectly forces industries which cannot increase their black workforces except by moving, to replace labour with machinery.

*In July 1978, Soweto Committee of Ten member Leonard Mosala stated that the Act had prevented the creation of 101,500 jobs for Africans since its inception.<sup>18</sup>*

By restricting the movement of African workers and the jobs they

may take, influx control regulations and the pass laws ensure that African labour power remains cheap, abundant and unorganised and can be turned on and off and moved about at will, according to the requirements of the different sectors of the white economy and the political dictates of apartheid. In 1975 alone, 386,414 Africans were prosecuted under these laws, and hundreds of thousands more were stopped to have their papers checked.<sup>18</sup>

Africans who become unemployed can be shunted off to the bantustans where there is no wage employment for them and few opportunities for informal sector activity. In fact, if the unemployed were allowed to stay in the urban areas where demand is much greater, it is likely that they could be absorbed into the informal sector – selling foodstuffs, clothing and other goods, brewing and selling drinks, collecting scrap iron, or working as self-employed mechanics, builders and carpenters.

The potential value of the informal sector in reducing unemployment is illustrated by a survey of the Crossroads squatter camp near Cape Town in December 1977. Of 501 economically active Africans surveyed, no less than 12.6% were engaged solely in the informal sector – and their average income of R29 per week was, in fact, R3 higher than that of Africans in wage employment.<sup>19</sup>

### **Private agreements**

The main mechanism by which job reservation in industry is maintained is through industrial council agreements under the Industrial Conciliation Act. These allow registered unions and management to enter into closed shop agreements under which skilled jobs are restricted to those workers who are members of, or eligible to be members of, registered unions. Since Africans cannot by law belong to registered trade unions, they are excluded from such jobs. Once such closed shop agreements are reached, they are published in the Government Gazette and have the force of law.

The 1977 Supplementary Agreement for the Iron, Steel, Engineering and Metallurgical Industries, for example, which covers 450,000 persons ( $\frac{3}{4}$  of them Africans) stipulates as follows. "No person who is not eligible for membership of any of the trade union parties to this agreement shall be employed on Rates B and AB work without prior authorisation by the council."<sup>20</sup> Rates B and AB, of

course, are the skilled and highest paid jobs, which Africans are consequently prohibited from doing, except with the permission of the industry's industrial council – a council on which they have no voting rights.

Other agreements, as in the motor industry, impose a *total* registered union closed shop, but then exempt the lowest grades of work from the necessity of complying with its provisions.<sup>21</sup> In the event of a recession the council will withdraw its exemption and the Africans employed in these jobs will be sacked.

Another device to the same end is a ratio clause, restricting the number of semi-skilled workers who may be employed for each skilled worker. For example, the agreement between employers and the registered unions in the motor industry lays down a maximum of one "repair shop assistant" to every two skilled mechanics.<sup>22</sup>

Because of these ratios the growth of demand for unskilled and semi-skilled African workers is limited by the growth rate of the predominantly white skilled labour force. Yet the rate of increase in Africans coming on to the labour market is far higher than the rate of increase of white skilled labour. Between 1951 and 1960 the annual increase in the economically active African population was 2.7%, while that of whites was only 1.7%. In the following decade, 1960 to 1970, the African and white labour forces increased on average by 4.5% and 3.1% per year respectively.<sup>23</sup> The result has been a steady increase in the numbers of unemployed Africans.

Use of racist job bars in industrial agreements is widespread. More than one-third of the agreements concluded by all the industrial councils in 1976 and 1977 had closed shop or ratio clauses, or both. All the major industries contained such clauses.<sup>24</sup>

Once these agreements are published in the Government Gazette they have the force of law and infringement of them becomes a criminal offence. There can, therefore, be little doubt of the importance of this form of job reservation.

### **Unequal education**

Racist discrimination in the educational system further contributes to the skilled labour bottleneck, making it very difficult for black people to acquire the education needed for many skilled occupations. In 1976 an average of R644 per pupil was spent on

white primary and secondary education, while for Africans the figure was R41.80.<sup>25</sup> Education is both free and compulsory for whites; for Africans it is neither.

The technical training provided for Africans is at the semi-skilled or operative level, aimed at enabling employers to make up skilled labour shortages by substituting machinery and semi-skilled operatives for skilled artisans. Since 1975 the regime has established eight pre-service industrial training centres in certain African townships, training pupils in basic manual skills in woodwork, metalwork, welding, etc. Pupils wanting to qualify as artisans, however, are obliged to undergo practical training in the bantustans, and the number of courses available to them there is limited. A further scheme started in 1975 was the establishment of in-service centres, to train Africans for semi-skilled or operative work in specific industries. In addition, 20 registered private ad hoc border industry and five ad hoc state industrial schools, also for the training of factory operatives, were in operation.

Although the Apprenticeship Act formally contains no colour bar, the Standard Six requirement for apprenticeships, an absence of technical colleges for Africans, and registered union and government opposition have effectively excluded Africans from apprenticeships outside of the bantustans. Even Coloureds and Asians are still excluded from many trades by the white trade unions, the main exceptions being in the building, furniture, metal and engineering and printing industries, and then usually only in the Cape and Natal.

The 1977 manpower survey shows the effectiveness of race discrimination in controlling entrance to the skilled trades. Of all artisans and apprentices in employment, 79% were white. In the metal and engineering trades the proportion was as high as 91.5%, in the electrical trade 96%, and in the motor trade 86%. *Only 2.1% of all apprentices were Africans, yet Africans make up over 71% of the total working population.*

In other skilled categories, such as professional, semi-professional and technical, and in managerial and administrative categories, the proportion of Africans had actually decreased from two years previously. Indeed, as the *Financial Mail* stated: *"The view that more and more Africans are occupying skilled technical and managerial positions is a myth . . . The opposite is the case"*<sup>26</sup>



### **Rate for the job**

Given a system of unequal education and training, the principle of the rate for the job can also work to restrict African employment in skilled jobs. If management is faced with choosing between a white or black worker and is forced to pay the same rate, he will almost certainly tend to employ the better educated white. The rate for the job can, therefore, act as an alternative to more direct forms of colour bar maintenance, and this fact explains why the white unions in TUCSA now so fervently champion this principle.

The rate for the job may be set so high that management cannot employ workers who may be prepared to work at a lower wage. In the 1978 engineering industry wage negotiations, when employers demanded that Africans be allowed entrance to skilled jobs, the unions resorted to the wage colour bar. They demanded large increases in the minimum rate of R2.18 an hour stipulated for job category A, so as to bring this in line with the *actual* rate of R3.50 an hour they were already getting.

Communist Party general secretary Moses Kotane pointed out these dangers back in 1938. "We must beware of meaningless and dangerous slogans such as equal pay for equal work," he told the party's congress. "In the past this slogan affected the Non-European workers adversely." *The slogan only made sense if there were equal opportunities for all*, he stressed.<sup>27</sup>

So the variety of factors making up the colour bar is considerable; their effect is exacerbated by different rates of population growth. Whites are expected to fill most skilled jobs, yet the rate of white population growth is well below the national average. The slow growth of skilled labour in turn retards the economic growth rate and leads to greater capital intensity. Both factors reduce the rate at which new jobs can be created and boost unemployment. *Both have their root cause in apartheid.*

### **The human face of unemployment**

Who are the unemployed? What are their ages, sex, education, training and skill levels? Two private surveys conducted among urban and rural Africans in 1977 go some way towards providing an answer.

In a survey of 1,212 persons in Pretoria, the economist Lieb Loots found that almost 16% of the men and 34% of the women were unemployed.<sup>28</sup> Of these, 67% were in the 15 to 24-year-old age group. Relatively few were illiterate or semi-literate (if education at least to Standard Two is taken as the criterion of literacy). Some 64% of the men and 70% of the women had between five and nine years of schooling. Another 16% of the men and 13% of the women had Junior Certificate or better.

In a rural survey of 1,338 persons in Saulspoort, Bophutatswana, Loots found unemployment rates of 14% among men and 19% among women. Some 74% of the unemployed were between 15 and 24 years of age.

In Pretoria, 26% of unemployed men and 51% of unemployed women had been out of work for longer than six months. In Saulspoort, the proportions were 39% of the unemployed men and 21% of the unemployed women.

The second survey, carried out among the *unemployed only*, was conducted by the Agency for Industrial Mission in late 1977, covering 902 persons in Johannesburg, Durban and Pietermaritzburg and 401 in the bantustans of Lebowa and KwaZulu.<sup>29</sup>

In Johannesburg, 10% of those questioned had never had a job, in Durban 14% and in Pietermaritzburg 31%. Among the 15 to 24-year-olds, 26% in Johannesburg had never been employed, 24% in Durban and 68% in Pietermaritzburg.

Coupled with this were long average periods of unemployment for those who had worked before. *Half of those in Johannesburg and Durban who had worked previously had been out of work for more than six months* (the maximum period for which unemployment benefits are paid) and *more than one-third in Pietermaritzburg were in the same position.*

The bulk of the urban unemployed were higher primary or lower secondary school leavers, with a sizeable portion (between one-seventh and one-third) having Junior Certificate or better. Between 52% and 57% of them had lost their jobs as a result of retrenchment.

### **Support of the unemployed**

Social security provisions cover only a fraction of South Africa's work-force — almost all of them white. In 1975 only 2.5 million of

the country's 9,771,000 economically active population were covered by the Unemployment Insurance Act, according to official figures. Domestic workers in private households, agricultural workers, African mine workers and certain types of seasonal workers are all excluded.

As the survey by the Agency for Industrial Mission showed, half the unemployed in Johannesburg and Durban and over one-third in Pietermaritzburg had already been out of work for longer than the maximum period for which unemployment benefits were paid. Only 43% of the unemployed had applied for benefits in Johannesburg, 40% in Durban and 53% in Pietermaritzburg. In Lebowa only 7% had applied and in Kwazulu only 43%.<sup>30</sup> Almost all the rest of the bantustan unemployed would have been excluded because of their previous category of work. Those unemployed youngsters who had never had a job would also have been excluded from claiming, and would have no other source of social security available to them. Of those who had registered for benefits, 55% in Johannesburg, 63% in Durban and 98% in Pietermaritzburg had received money. Of those who had registered but not received money in Johannesburg, 65% were still waiting and 35% did not persist, or ran into insuperable problems with the labour bureau; in Durban the respective figures were 54% and 46%.

The problems involved in getting any money, once having claimed, can be enormous. As the Black Sash reported in November 1975: "For the average worker to claim UIF benefits is a major undertaking, involving endless 'trips' back and forth. Very seldom is the correct procedure explained to workers by their employers, whose responsibility it would seem to be . . . In some tribal bureaux, workers have not been able to collect UIF benefits because there were no more forms available. In one instance, this went on for two months."<sup>31</sup> As the period of unemployment is only deemed to start from the date of *applying* for benefits, it means these workers had already lost two months' benefits.

In August 1977 the Black Sash again commented "People with UIF cards, no penalties and living in the area of their local Bantu Affairs Commissioner are having to wait 15 weeks and more before receiving their money. And what is more, they dare not miss one week of signing the form, otherwise they will have to start from

scratch again and lose the weeks previously signed for. The Advice Office experiences daily the frustrations and 'red tape' hampering workers in their efforts to draw UIF benefits."<sup>32</sup>

In February 1978 the Natal office of the Black Sash listed over 350 cases where African workers had come up against difficulties in getting the benefits due to them. Workers in rural areas had particular hardships, it reported. "People whose magisterial district is in a remote rural area, for example people living in the Molweni area, have to travel to the magistrate in Ndwedwe to sign weekly for UIF benefits. The cost of this journey is R4 return per person per week . . . How can people who are not earning, afford to travel just to sign for benefits they hope to get in some distant future?"<sup>33</sup>

According to the Agency for Industrial Mission survey, most of the unemployed interviewed were forced to rely on the rest of their families for support. And only one-fifth of these families in Johannesburg and one-tenth in Durban and Pietermaritzburg were able to cope with the extra burden relatively easily. *Half of the families in Johannesburg and nearly two-thirds in Durban and Pietermaritzburg fell into severe poverty as a result.*<sup>34</sup>

The following two South African press reports give a glimpse of the soul-grinding struggle to keep alive this can entail:

"Twenty kilometres from Johannesburg's glittering shopping centres is another world where young and old search the dumping grounds for things that will fetch a few cents and keep starvation at bay. With unemployment soaring the Zone 1, Diepkloof, dumping grounds have become a scavenger's paradise. Anything goes as trucks dump rubbish and women and children jump into the waste in search of wares they can sell. Old and young scratch through the waste, collecting bottles, aluminium, bits of iron and other odds and ends to sell to junk shops or the travelling 'bottle bags' for money or food. What used to be a pupil's pastime has become full employment for the hungry." (*Post* 20/11/78).

"A number of destitute families from Soweto are forced to find their daily food at a municipal garbage heap near their homes . . . They search each day's truckloads of garbage, gleaning food and other useful fragments from what others in Johannesburg's more prosperous suburbs have discarded as inedible or useless. They compete with the Roodepoort municipal bulldozer, trotting ahead of

it before garbage is flattened into a central dump at Maraisburg. Ahead of them work the pickers, employed by a contractor to reclaim usable plastic, glass and other materials that can be recycled. . . The central dump is one hour's walk from the township. Those living off the dump are not only old-age pensioners, but destitute families and jobless young women and men . . . Said a widow with ten children: 'It's shameful, because it is hard for a proud person to accept such a way of life.' " (*Sunday Express* 10/12/78).

### **A capitalist problem**

Unemployment is a *capitalist* problem. In an economy where ownership of the means of production is in the hands of a small group of individuals, selfish personal interest makes rational national planning impossible. Each factory owner looks only to his own interests, his own profit, when taking decisions. If it is more profitable for him to put his money into land speculation, he does so. The workers who produce his wealth are hired during a boom and thrown on to the scrapheap during recession.

Even the developed capitalist countries such as the US, Britain, West Germany, France, Japan, Canada and Italy, had over 16 million unemployed in 1978.<sup>35</sup> In all these countries the young, black people and women were especially hit. In the US, 3 million young people between the ages of 16 and 24 could not find jobs. In the Common Market countries there were over 2 million young jobless. In Britain and Italy roughly half of all the jobless were young people. In the past ten years the number of young people out of work has risen nine times in France, six times in Germany and five times in Britain.

Women are particularly hit. According to the International Labour Bureau,<sup>36</sup> in the year May 1975 to May 1976, 7 million women lost their jobs in Western Europe, the US, Canada, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Women make up 40% of unemployed in these countries, although only 35% of all workers are women. According to the ILB, women are the first to be sacked in times of crisis and the last to be employed in an economic upturn.

In the US, black people (11% of the population) account for about one-quarter of the unemployed and the figure is even higher among young black people. *In 1976, 60% of black Americans were jobless.*



*In the Socialist countries, where the entire people own the means of production and there are no exploiters, a planned economic system under which there are no recessions or stagnation in production has wiped out unemployment for ever. In the Soviet Union after the socialist revolution, despite the devastation of the economy caused by the first world war, a civil war by counter-revolutionaries and an economic blockade by imperialist countries, unemployment was totally wiped out in only 13 years.*

In the Soviet Union power belongs to the working people, and the trade unions and the state establish relations of co-operation and mutual support. Deputies nominated by the unions can be found at all levels of state power — from the district and rural soviets up to the USSR Supreme Soviet. Trade unions have the right to introduce draft laws reflecting the interests of their members in the Supreme Soviet and the Supreme Soviets of the 15 individual republics. The unions take an active part in framing national economic plans and such plans are approved by the state only after the unions have agreed to them.

The constitution of the Soviet Union guarantees every citizen not only the right to a job, but also the right to choose the type of job, in accordance with vocation, capabilities, training and education. Every year more than 2 million new jobs are created according to plan.<sup>38</sup> The basis for this is provided by the USSR's system of free occupational training, and by schemes to help workers raise their skill standards and learn new specialities. There are over 6,000 technical schools offering courses for two to four years. In addition, technical courses are arranged at factories to enable workers to raise their skills and to study new equipment and technology.

Soviet law states that no worker may be dismissed from his job, *whatever the reason*, without the consent of the factory trade union committee. The union decision is final — it cannot be reversed by any other body. And even if a worker is dismissed — for continued drunkenness, say — he will be offered work elsewhere.

In the Soviet Union, as in other socialist countries, the introduction of new technology also leads to redundancies. But, unlike the capitalist countries, under socialism the whole process is planned, and redundant workers have by law to be found jobs elsewhere, *without loss of pay*. Mechanisation and technical progress

holds no fears for the workers, but is seen instead, as a means of raising their skills and making their work less arduous. In 1977 over 34 million men and women learned new trades or raised their skill standards in the Soviet Union. Mass unskilled trades are vanishing. Extensive mechanisation in the last five year period freed 100,000 diggers, 115,000 bricklayers, etc., for work in other, less arduous occupations.<sup>39</sup>

### **Building a new South Africa**

Socialism has put an end to exploitation. In Lenin's words, it gives everyone the opportunity "to work for oneself, and to employ all the achievements of modern technology and culture in one's work." In South Africa the first steps towards the building of a socialist society will be laid by the political, economic and social reforms embodied in the Freedom Charter — the programme of the national liberation struggle.

Only by nationalising the monopolies, the mines and the banks, and by regulating the economy and trade in the interests of *all* the people will we be able to lay the material and cultural basis for the advance to socialism. Only by solving the land question, by redividing the land among those who till it, by promoting co-operative and state agriculture, will our people be freed from hunger once and for all.

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5. *FM* 20/10/1978. The total excluded the now "independent" bantustans of the Transkei and Bophutatswana — both areas of widespread joblessness.
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*The Life Story of Yusuf Dadoo, national chairman of the South African Communist Party and a tireless fighter for national and social liberation.*

# **A PROUD HISTORY OF STRUGGLE**

**by Essop Pahad**

Yusuf Mohamed Dadoo – popularly known as “Mota”<sup>1</sup> or “Doc” celebrates his 70th birthday on September 5, 1979. The story of his life is inextricably bound up with the resistance to racial discrimination and apartheid, and the forging of ever closer links between the Indian and African and Coloured people in the struggle for national liberation.

Yusuf Dadoo was born in Krugersdorp on the West Rand in 1909. His father Mohamed Dadoo arrived in South Africa in the 1880s, in the wake of the first Indian immigrants who arrived in the 1860s as indentured labourers on the sugar fields. The working and living conditions of the Indians at that time can only be compared to slavery. However, on the expiry of their indentures many of them became market gardeners, railway and council workers and domestic

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1. “Mota” is a Gujarati term of endearment reserved for those held in high regard and esteem.

servants. This was the origin of the Indian working class in South Africa.

Mohamed Dadoo the elder came to South Africa from Western India. The Indian immigrants were divided on lines of language, culture, tradition and religion. It was Gandhi who created the base for the unity of the Indian people through his passive resistance campaign in South Africa in 1906 and 1913.

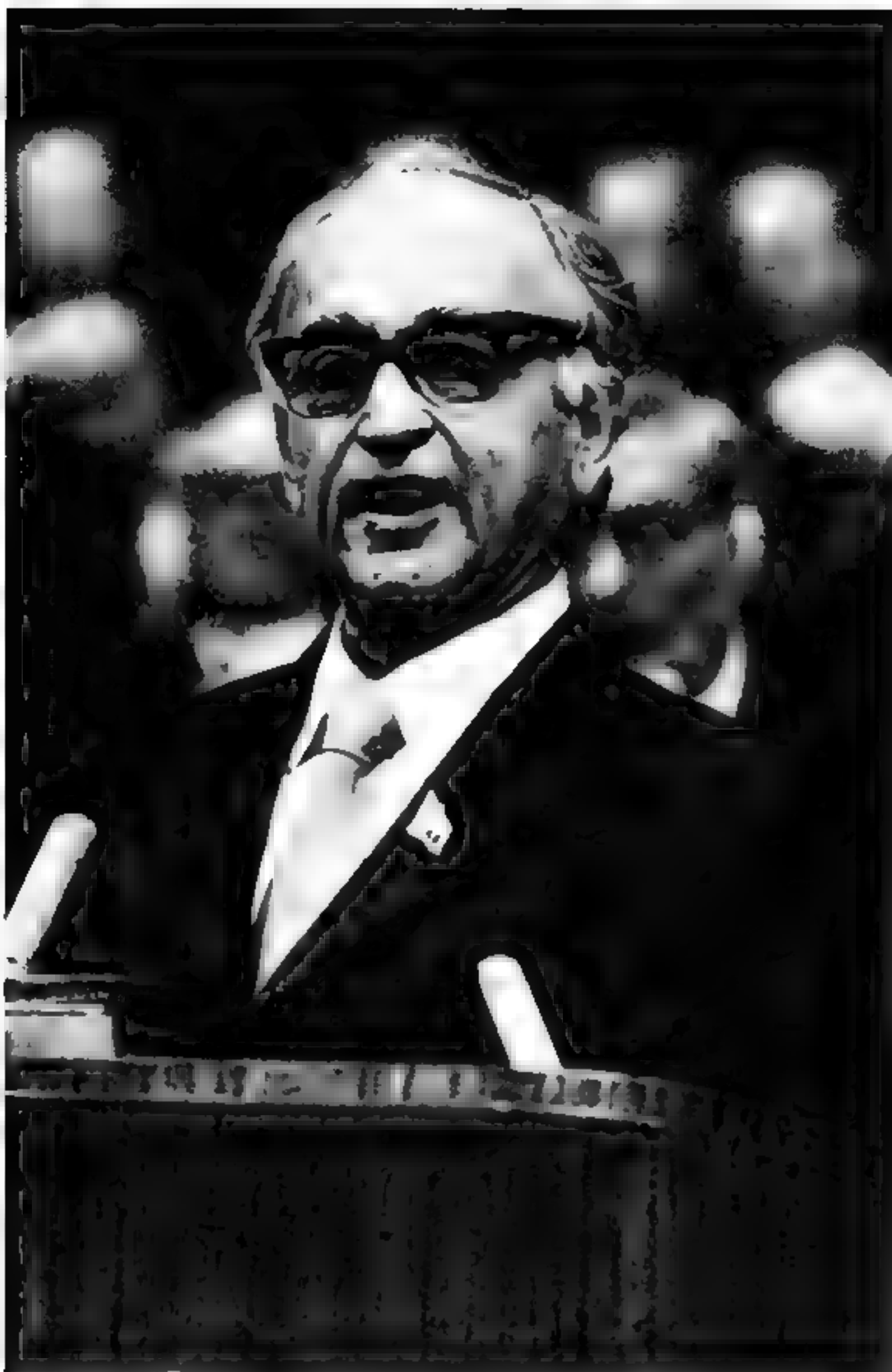
As the majority of Indians were brought to South Africa to work as indentured labourers on the sugar plantations, most of them lived in Natal. By 1946 27.12 per cent of the economically active population were workers in industry. Today the Indians constitute nearly 3% of the total South African population, the overwhelming majority of them members of the black working class. It was the active participation of the workers in the affairs of the Indian Congress which made possible its transformation into a radical instrument of struggle against apartheid and colour bars.

Whilst a schoolboy Yusuf Dadoo used to attend meetings held by former stalwarts of Gandhi and with some of his contemporaries such as Molvi A. I. Cachalia used to help mobilise support for the All-Indian National Congress in its struggle against British colonialism. At Aligarh, in India, where he completed his matriculation, his hatred for and opposition to British imperialism intensified.

As the eldest son, his father expected him to go into business on leaving school, but Dadoo adamantly refused and insisted on further study. In 1929 he arrived in London, friendless and without contacts, with the intention of studying medicine. Within a few months he was one of six persons arrested for participating in a demonstration against the imperialist Simons Commission. In an attempt to curb his political activities his father insisted that he transfer his studies to Edinburgh.

It was in Edinburgh that Dadoo's political horizons were widened and he gradually came closer to understanding the nature of colonialism and the capitalist system which gave birth to it. He became involved in a wide variety of political activities and began to read Marxist literature. The *Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels gave him a new outlook on the struggle against colonialism and imperialism and the place and role of the working class in the revolutionary movement. He became convinced that the South





Dr Yusuf Dadoo addressing the 25th congress of the CPSU in Moscow 1976

African Indian Congress could only advance their fight for freedom in close co-operation with the national organisations of the African and the Coloured peoples.

In 1936, when Dadoo returned to South Africa, the national liberation and working class movements were in some disarray. The racist regime had rushed through the white Parliament the 1936 Hertzog Bills which form the basis of the present Bantustan policy. The Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) was still suffering from the effects of the sectarianism which had plagued it in the 1930s. The Indian Congresses were content to mouth rhetorical denunciations of racist legislation whilst pursuing a policy of compromise and of isolation from the African and Coloured people.

The struggle in South Africa was in need of sincere, courageous revolutionaries who could capture and fire the imagination of the toiling masses, who could speak the language the people understood and were prepared to make the personal sacrifices demanded by a life-and-death struggle. Dadoo was one such revolutionary. He illuminated the political landscape with the sudden clarity of a meteor - but fortunately in a less transitory manner. He grew in stature, political experience and maturity and developed a steel-like resolve never to rest until South Africa was free from the triple scourge of racism, colonialism and capitalism. He bent all his efforts towards building the unity of the national liberation and working class movements in South Africa.

Dadoo was not alone in this crusade. Amongst the Indians there were the veterans of Gandhi's resistance movement and contemporaries such as T. N. Naidoo, P. S. Joshi, Molvi A. I. Cachalia, Nana Sita, G.H.I. Pahad, J. Nanabhai and others who were equally determined to change the ideological and political positions of the Indian Congresses. With Dadoo as the acknowledged leader they formed the nationalist bloc of the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC) in March 1939 to change its policies from the inside. The nationalist bloc attracted 5 to 6 thousand people to their meetings. This was impressive considering that the total population of the Indians in the Transvaal in 1936 was only 25,493. During this period Dadoo went on speaking tours throughout the whole province, and emerged as a powerful orator. People flocked to his meetings which gave them a renewed sense of pride and dignity. No

longer did they have to crawl and plead with the white bosses. They could and did stand up for their legitimate rights as South Africans. Already at that time he had become a household name amongst the Indians in South Africa, many of whom proudly displayed his photograph in their homes

### **Non-European United Front**

Dadoo was also active in a wider political spectrum. In 1938 he was one of the founders of the Non-European United Front (NEUF) in Johannesburg. Acting in harmony and concert with other national leaders, some of whom were Communists, such as J. B. Marks, E. Mofutsanyana, Josie Mpama, G. Carr and Alpheus Maliba, the NEUF took up the vital problems agitating the African people. In his capacity as secretary Dadoo diligently attended to the daily organisational requirements of the NEUF. As one of the main speakers he constantly addressed mass meetings in African townships and locations in which he called for united mass action against living conditions. He became popular amongst the African people and not surprisingly a square in Orlando was named Dadoo Square. In the process of the struggle Dadoo and J. B. Marks became close friends and comrades-in-arms and remained so until Marks' death. In some respects they had similar personalities. They were ebullient, open-hearted, easy to get on with, and both had a lively sense of humour. Through their practical activities and personal relations they gave meaning and life to the concept of the unity of the oppressed working people.

Dadoo's profound political understanding and wide variety of political activities logically led to his joining the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) in early 1939. By then the CPSA under the firm leadership of Moses Kotane, its general secretary, had largely overcome the drawbacks of sectarianism which affected the Party in the early thirties. Dadoo says that without a Party dedicated to realising the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism in south Africa he would have remained a half-developed revolutionary. It was in the CPSA that he matured theoretically and this in turn immensely improved his practical work and approach.

The South African situation was transformed with the outbreak of the second world war. Communist and non-communist progressives

characterised the war as an imperialist war, and fought tooth and nail against the racist regime's attempts to recruit black soldiers. Dadoo and his comrades argued most vehemently and persuasively that as long as there was racist oppression and segregation in the armed forces, there could be no question of countenancing the recruitment of black soldiers.

In 1940 Dadoo was arrested for printing and distributing a leaflet published by the NEUF which said "Don't support this war, where the rich get richer and the poor get killed". When he appeared in court there were mass demonstrations outside and during an adjournment the people, Africans and Indians, carried him shoulder-high to his home — a distance of about 3 kilometres. Dadoo refused to pay his fine of £25, but was saved from imprisonment by a supporter who paid his fine because he could not bear to see "this wonderful person" going to prison.

In January 1941 Dadoo was arrested once more — this time for allegedly inciting the African people in Benoni where he had spoken at a meeting. Once more his trial was the occasion for a mass demonstration. He was sentenced to a fine of £40 or four months imprisonment, and once again elected to go to prison. His statement to court was a powerful indictment of racist and national oppression and a bold declaration of the NEUF's opposition to the war:

"The struggle of the non-European people for liberation is not an isolated struggle; it is merely a continuation of the struggle of the oppressed masses carried on in many lands . . . The Government may imprison me, it can fling hundreds and thousands into jail and concentration camps, but it cannot and shall not suppress the demand for freedom which arises from the crying hearts of the non-Europeans . . . The struggle goes on . . . , all non-Europeans unite! Create a fighting unity! . . ."

Dadoo vividly recalls his prison experience at the notorious "Blue Sky" prison in Boksburg. For the African prisoners it was "hell". The prison warders were horribly cruel, subjecting them to the most gruesome treatment. Some African prisoners died because even though they were ill they were sent out to work. When the other prisoners realised that Dadoo was in for politics they became very sympathetic and offered to do his share of the dirty chores such as cleaning out the latrine buckets. Dadoo politely refused.

Whilst Dadoo was in prison, protest meetings were held throughout the country, and the *Guardian* reported that in Durban his imprisonment was the chief topic of conversation and practically every street had a slogan demanding Dadoo's release.

### **People's War**

In June 1941 Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union. In a flash the progressive forces everywhere marshalled their energies in support of the world's first socialist country. The CPSA, after a lengthy and thorough debate, came to the conclusion that the character of the war had changed. It was now a people's war in which the Soviet Union, the only socialist country in the world, had to be defended and assisted.

The burden of conveying this change of line to the people fell on the shoulders of Kotane and Dadoo. In the beginning they experienced great difficulties and at one meeting in Maritzburg Dadoo and other speakers were shouted down and had to make a hurried exit. But by explaining the issues honestly and simply, by analysing the qualitative change in the international situation and showing the role of the Soviet Union, "the land without colour bar", the CPSA gradually won the support of influential leaders and members of the national liberation movement and of the broad

A later complicating factor was the entry of Japan into the war. Many black people regarded Japan as a "coloured nation" inflicting defeat on a "white enemy" and openly expressed the hope that Japan would attack South Africa and liberate them. Once more the CPSA with Kotane and Dadoo in the forefront had to meet the challenge head on. Meetings and propaganda campaigns were organised to expose the true nature of rapacious Japanese imperialism.

The heroic defence of their motherland by the Soviet people and the exploits of the Red Army won the admiration, respect and love of the oppressed people. At the sacrifice of 20 million lives, the Soviet Union played the major part in ensuring that the Nazi millenium did not even last five years. The war brought out the greatness of Soviet society and opened the eyes of millions to the true nature and achievements of socialism.



The influence of African workers, youth and progressive intelligentsia in the African National Congress was growing apace during these years. Leaders such as Lembede, Tloome, Sisulu, Tambo and Mandela were in the forefront demanding a more militant and revolutionary policy. Within the Transvaal and Natal Indian Congresses, too, great changes were taking place. By 1945 the militants, led by Drs. Dadoo and Naicker, had all but taken control. In the period 1941-43 the membership of the Communist Party rose fourfold — a clear indication that the Party and its policies were gaining support from the working masses.

The lives of the African people, then as now, were characterised by extreme poverty, total insecurity in employment and every other field of life, the hated Pass Laws and brutal pass raids. In the Transvaal the NEUF had organised a huge campaign against the Pass Laws which included meetings, rallies and demonstrations in the locations and townships and outside factory gates. Dadoo was one of the most prominent speakers. The campaign reached its peak at a representative conference in May 1945 attended by over 540 delegates at which a National Anti-Pass Council was elected with Dr. A. B. Xuma, President of the ANC, as Chairman and Dadoo as Vice-Chairman.

It was partly through the activities of the NEUF that the broad united militant front of the national organisations of the African, Coloured and Indian people and the CPSA was developed and strengthened.

### **A landmark in the struggle**

1946, the year of the Indian Passive Resistance Campaign and the glorious African mine workers' strike, witnessed an unprecedented confrontation between the forces of national and social liberation and those of an obdurate vicious racist oppressor and exploiter.

By the time that Smuts — a thoroughbred racist — had introduced the Ghetto Act, which sought to segregate the Indians residentially and commercially even further and to introduce a limited form of communal representation, the Indian Congresses, greatly strengthened by the active participation at all levels of the

Indian working class, were ready for confrontation. The hard, grinding work carried out by Drs. Dadoo and Naicker, trade-unionists such as H. A. Naidoo, G. Ponen, M. P. Naicker, D. Seedat, D. Singh, M. D. Naidoo, G. Singh and others had infused in the Indians a spirit of resistance.

During the two-year campaign Dadoo and the other Passive Resistance organisers worked with the purposeful energy of a hive of bees, and won a huge response from the people.

In the course of that campaign Dadoo went to prison twice. The first time was in July 1946. The second time was in March 1948 when he and Dr. Naicker were sentenced to six months' imprisonment for "inciting" Indian people to break the law which prohibited Indians from moving from one province to another without a permit. The imprisonment was received with wrath and indignation by the Indians who responded with slogans such as "Long Live Drs. Dadoo and Naicker!" and "We Shall Resist!".

The Passive Resistance Campaign, in which nearly 2,000 men and women voluntarily courted imprisonment, is a glorious page in the annals of the militant resistance of the Indian people. Moreover it had a far wider long-term impact in that it helped to lay the basis for the 1952 Defiance Campaign.

Despite his overburdened schedule in that campaign Dadoo did not neglect his other political duties and tasks. In 1946 he was a member of the Central Committee and Chairman of the Johannesburg District of the CPSA, vice-chairman of the National Anti-Pass Council, President of the TIC, chairman of the Transvaal Passive Resistance Council and joint-chairman of the National Passive Resistance Council.

As chairman of the Johannesburg district of the CPSA Dadoo made his contribution to the strengthening and development of African trade unions, but it was above all the sterling work of his comrade J. B. Marks which welded the African Mineworkers' Union into a force capable of bringing out, in the week August 12 to 19, 1946, 100,000 African miners on strike for higher wages — one of the high points of African resistance in this century.

In 1947 Drs. Dadoo and Naicker made an extensive and triumphant tour of India where they met most of the national leaders

including Gandhi, Nehru and Mohammed Ali Jinnah. They addressed a great number of meetings and also attended the first All-Asian Conference.

In March of the same year the historic Xuma-Naicker-Dadoo pact was signed, marking a significant development in the co-operation between the African and Indian peoples. The "Doctors' Pact" made a bold demand for full franchise and the removal of all discriminatory and oppressive legislation.

But before the co-operation could be consolidated riots broke out between Africans and Indians in Durban in January 1949. There is no doubt that the racist authorities encouraged, aided and abetted the carnage. Having stood aside in the beginning when prompt action could have averted the riots the army and police later opened fire indiscriminately and killed many Africans. The casualty figures were as follows: Dead — 142 87 Africans, 50 Indians, 1 European and 4 who were not identified. Injured — 1,087, 541 Africans, 503 Indians, 11 Coloureds and 32 Europeans. Fifty-eight of the injured died later.

The response of the ANC and the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) was prompt and effective. Both organisations fully realised that firm action had to be taken to defeat the enemy's plot to divide the oppressed masses. The African and Indian Congresses submitted a joint memorandum to the Commission of Enquiry which was set up and with many other organisations withdrew from that commission when they were prevented from cross-examining witnesses. In February 1949 30 African and Indian leaders issued a joint statement in which they emphasised: "the fundamental and basic causes of the disturbances are traceable to the political, economic and social structure of this country."

At the time of the riots Dadoo was abroad. His view then — as now was that the racist enemy would stop at nothing to provoke and incite violent divisions within and amongst the oppressed national groups. The most important lesson was that for unity to be really effective it had to permeate to the grass roots and this process had to be speeded up. It was the unity in action of all the oppressed blacks and democratic whites initiated and organised by the Congress movement in the fifties which defeated all the enemy's nefarious schemes and conspiracies to provoke similar riots and disturbances.

## **A Glorious Decade**

The Nationalist Party won the all-white election in 1948 on the basis of a virulent white chauvinist and anti-communist campaign. However, whilst the white electorate further entrenched the power and influence of the racists and fascists, the national liberation movements and the CPSA laid the basis for a common united mass militant resistance. Most significantly the adoption of the 1949 Programme of Action was a clear indication that the ANC was now getting ready to assume its historic role. An impressive demonstration of the unity and power of the national liberation and working class movements was the highly successful May 1, 1950 strike in Johannesburg and the Reef. But before this unity could be strengthened the racist regime introduced a Bill in the All-White Parliament to ban the CPSA. This was recognised by Communists and non-Communists alike as a prelude to the banning of all people's organisations which spoke out against apartheid and racially discriminatory laws and demanded justice and equal democratic rights for all.

Meeting before the ban came into effect, the Central Committee of the Party decided to dissolve itself with a view to frustrating the aims of the enemy. For Dadoo the decision to dissolve the Party was one of the most painful he had ever had to take part in, but he considered at the time that there was no alternative. However, there was never in his mind any doubt that the situation in South Africa demanded the active and vital presence of an independent party of the working class, fighting for national liberation and socialism. When Moses Kotane took the first steps towards reconstituting the Party in illegal conditions, Dadoo and others were with him from the outset. Units were established in the main centres of the country and by 1953 an underground conference was held in Johannesburg attended by Communists from all over the country. At this conference a new central committee was elected – Dadoo being one of them – with Moses Kotane as general secretary. A new name was adopted, the South African Communist Party (SACP), heir to the glorious traditions of the CPSA.

Dadoo steeled himself to the arduous task of working in an illegal Party whilst remaining a prominent figure in the public eye. He and other Communists studied the experiences of other underground

parties and resistance movements and learned how to operate with a combination of caution and precision which enabled them to escape the attentions of the security police. Slowly the Party became more influential and recruited to its ranks some of the most dedicated and courageous freedom fighters in the national liberation and trade union movements. The composition of the membership and leadership since its reconstitution has reflected accurately the situation in South Africa where the African working class is the main force for social renewal. Commenting on the attacks of the enemy and sometimes even well-meaning friends that the Communists used a back-door approach to infiltrate the national liberation organisations Dadoo is emphatic that the SACP never entertained any idea of dominating any organisation. He points out that as Communists they were as patriotic as anyone else in fighting racism and white domination for the freedom of the black people.

But they were also fighting for socialism and for that it was absolutely necessary to have an independent vanguard party of the working class based on Marxism-Leninism – a party that understood that racist oppression and white supremacy is the creation of capitalism, colonialism and imperialism and that the national liberation of the African people is the precondition for the building of a socialist South Africa. This is what the Communists work for, fight for, go to prison for and die for. There never has been nor ever will be any attempt to dominate any organisation. The SACP is an indispensable part of the national liberation front headed by the ANC.

### **Defiance Campaign**

In 1950, Dadoo was elected President of the South African Indian Congress in recognition of his contribution to the struggle. Nominating him for the post, Dr Naicker called him "one of the greatest sons of South Africa". Soon the SAIC was to join with the ANC to organise a Defiance Campaign against unjust laws in a bid to raise the struggle of the oppressed to new and higher levels. A planning Council was set up consisting of Dr. Moroka (Chairman), Walter Sisulu, J. B. Marks, Yusuf Dadoo and Yusuf Cachalia. The Council was instructed to prepare a report on the methods and forms of struggle to be adopted. That report, which was the basis for the



organisation of the Defiance Campaign, was prepared mainly by Sisulu and Dadoo. Though he had met Sisulu some years previously, this was the first time that Dadoo had worked so closely with him. They had continuous discussions in which their common outlook and friendship blossomed. Dadoo was impressed by Sisulu's sharp analytical mind, his pragmatism and his common touch with the people.

Nelson Mandela was elected volunteer-in-chief with Molvi Cachalia his deputy. Already at that time Mandela's courage, devotion to duty, magnetic personality and dynamism had manifested themselves. Following Kotane's defiance of his banning orders, Dadoo and Bopape followed suit. Once more Dadoo found himself in prison. Unencumbered by the detail of daily work, he spent six very fruitful weeks discussing with Kotane and Bopape numerous problems that faced the revolutionary movements in South Africa. Dadoo says that Kotane was also very busy advising the ordinary prisoners on their legal rights and helping them to prepare their court cases.

Dadoo has no doubt that the Defiance Campaign in which over 8,000 courted imprisonment was one of the great acts of resistance in our revolutionary history. It led to the strengthening of the ANC and SAIC, generated a new spirit of militancy and a conscious feeling of organised resistance, and brought about the formation of the South African Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO) and the Congress of Democrats (COD) of white allies of the liberation movements.

The question of political consciousness and enlightenment, Dadoo maintains, is a complex process which assumes new features as changes occur in the working and living conditions of the people. For him the strength, vigour and influence of the leaders, however formidable their personal capabilities may be, lies in the growing political consciousness and organisation of the toiling masses and in their ability to express and articulate the collective will. Thus diverse forms of mass struggle, demonstrations, strikes, rallies, mass meetings, group discussions and other actions are the principal and most distinct expression of the will of the oppressed and exploited people.

The intensified repression of the racist regime had brought about a new situation and the revolutionary forces had to find new forms of

struggle to ensure that the mood and spirit of militancy did not flounder and ebb away. The Congress Alliance decided to hold a Congress of the People where a Freedom Charter could be adopted. At that time the Congress Alliance consisted of the ANC, SAIC, SACPO and SACOD. Later it was augmented and strengthened by the inclusion of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), the only non-racial trade union centre in South Africa.

Dadoo was continuously under banning orders which prevented him from participating openly in the hectic activities of the Congress Alliance. But this did not prevent him from making his contribution at secret meetings and discussions with leaders of the Congress Alliance and the SACP. He was consulted on all major issues and his views and analyses greatly respected.

On the suggestion of the ANC it was decided to award the honour of Isitwalandwe to Chief Lutuli, Dadoo and Father Huddleston. Dadoo was deeply touched that he was considered for this honour and even twenty-four years later says with emotion "I am at a loss for words to describe my feelings." His great regret was that like Chief Lutuli he could not participate in that great assembly as they were both banned. He also feels honoured to be associated with Lutuli, as Dadoo has the greatest respect and appreciation for Lutuli's incalculable contribution to the deepening of the revolutionary process in South Africa.

Dadoo is unequivocal that the Freedom Charter is really a People's Charter, reflecting the deep-seated feelings, grievances and aspirations of the masses who were active participants in its formulation. He characterises the Freedom Charter as the embodiment of the demands of the national liberation movement at the stage of the national democratic revolution which can and does unite the most diverse forces. The inclusion of the clause on the nationalisation of monopoly industries and banks he says is a logical demand of the national liberation movement in the conditions obtaining in South Africa, since it is not possible to overthrow the racist system without a fundamental and irreversible shift in economic and political power.

The period 1950-60 was characterised by the most formidable acts of mass militant resistance. In the urban areas the African working

class demonstrated its power and willingness to lead the struggle and to fulfil its historic mission. In the rural areas there were the heroic battles including armed uprisings of the people of Zeerust, Sekukuniland and Pondoland. The people's resistance in the rural areas was temporarily halted only because the enemy used the most barbarous and murderous methods of suppression. However these actions had a long-term impact on the will of the people to resist. In all of these activities the ANC was involved in one way or another.

For Dadoo the formation of the Congress Alliance was a high-water mark in the process of bringing about unity in action. From the very beginning Dadoo operated on the basis that the major role would have to be played by the African people and that the struggle for national liberation would have to be under the leadership and guidance of the ANC. The Congress Consultative Committee, which was the organisational expression of the Congress Alliance, was not a decision-making body. It discussed various issues, acted as a co-ordinating body and made recommendations which were not binding on any constituent part of the Alliance. In the conditions at that time the Congress Alliance under the leadership of the ANC was the most appropriate form for bringing about the unity of all those opposed to racism and apartheid.

### **Internationalism**

A genuine patriot, Dadoo clearly understood the organic relationship between the struggle in South Africa and the world-wide struggle against capitalism, colonialism and imperialism, for national liberation, peace, democracy and socialism. With Dadoo there were many leaders including Kotane, Marks, Mandela, Tambo, Tloome, Sisulu, Nokwe, A. Nzo, G. Mbeki, Bram Fischer and M. Mabida who worked tirelessly to expose the aggressive nature and conspiracies of imperialism and the forces of reaction. While the ANC was still legal, the Congress Alliance organised protest meetings and demonstrations and produced an immense amount of analytical and propaganda materials on a wide variety of international problems. A few such issues were the Zionist imperialist aggression against Egypt, the counter-revolutionary conspiracy in Hungary in 1956, the bloody French colonial wars against the people of Algeria and Indo-China, the imprisonment of Kenyatta, the CIA-inspired

murder of Lumumba, the Portuguese colonial massacres in Mozambique and Angola and the fight for peace and disarmament.

Furthermore, fraternal links were developed with progressive continental and international organisations of the workers, youth, students, women and peace fighters. After 1960 the SACP developed and strengthened its relations with the international communist movement. Today the ANC has an internationalist outlook with a breadth and scope which make it one of the leading anti-imperialist national liberation forces. Our people, whom the racists tried to isolate from world developments, developed a fierce hatred for imperialism and a love and respect for progressive forces throughout the world.

In spite of the Treason Trial 1956-1961 — which incarcerated so many of the leading activists, the struggle against the pass laws, Group Areas Act, Bantustans, forced removals, slave wages and inhuman exploitation went from strength to strength. To take the struggle against the pass laws to a new and higher level in 1960 the ANC planned a mass militant campaign. But the ANC plan was preempted by the Pan-African Congress (PAC) which was formed by some disgruntled, chauvinist and anti-communist elements within the ANC.

The PAC call for anti-pass demonstrations on March 21, 1960 was an ill-prepared adventurist action. In only two places, Cape Town and the Sharpeville-Evaton-Vereeniging complex, was there any kind of mass demonstration. The trigger-happy white police and army wantonly opened fire on the peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, killing 69 people. "Sharpeville Massacre" was the message that flashed all round the world. The callous brutality of the killings in Sharpeville and Langa exposed the fact that the fascist regime in South Africa would stop at nothing to preserve the privileges and power of the white minority and monopolists.

The experience of Sharpeville, taken together with the massive use of armed force and intimidation, backed by the white mass media, to suppress all popular struggles made it inevitable that non-violent mass resistance should give way to other methods. The revolutionary forces had to find alternative forms of struggle to meet and defeat the fascist terror. Thus at the initiative of the ANC and SACP came into being Umkhonto-We-Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the military wing

of the ANC. Into the ranks of Umkhonto came the most dedicated and fearless revolutionaries from all the racial groups. On December 16 1961 the first acts of sabotage took place in all the major cities. Preparations were made for a concerted, well-organised, armed revolutionary struggle. But the enemy was not unprepared. It introduced the most draconian legislation which effectively legalised torture and the murder of detainees and substantially increased military expenditure.

### **Dadoo Abroad**

Following the Sharpeville massacre the racist regime declared a state of emergency. Thousands were arrested including most of the leading members of the national liberation and working class movements. Dadoo with Kotane, Harmel and others evaded the fascist net and went into hiding. For some months they operated underground moving from one place to another and continuously keeping abreast of the developing situation. It was then decided that the time was ripe to make public the existence of the illegal SACP. Leaflets were distributed throughout the country and according to Dadoo the declaration was widely acclaimed by the working people. The SACP in consultation with the SAIC decided that Dadoo should go abroad to give the Party an external presence and to help in organising all-round international support for the internal struggle. In the discussions Dadoo vigorously argued that his place was in the underground, but he was overruled and as a disciplined Communist and revolutionary he submerged his own wishes and feelings and fulfilled the collective decision.

From London he travelled to different parts of the world to put the case of the oppressed, but maintained the closest contact with the movement at home and was able to make his contribution to the new programme of the Communist Party which was adopted at an illegal conference in Johannesburg in 1962. This programme has made a tremendous contribution to the theoretical elaboration of the nature and character of the racist socio-economic system in our country and to the creative development of Marxist-Leninist thought in our continent.

Following the Rivonia and subsequent trials of our brave freedom fighters, the revolutionary movements were compelled to retreat,



take stock of the changed conditions and map out new plans for the revolutionary struggle. However, despite the most sustained reign of terror over nearly twenty years the ANC and SACP were never cowed into submission. Time after time the fascists boasted that they had "broken the back" of the ANC and SACP, but this was never to be. The ANC with its clear programme of action and demands became the heart and the mind of the oppressed. The fascists may torture, maim, imprison and kill our revolutionary cadres and leaders but they will never destroy the ANC, SACP and SACTU.

A cardinal test of an organisation claiming to lead the people in struggle is its ability to analyse and discuss its achievements and shortcomings in an objective manner permeated by the principle of criticism and self-criticism. The ANC manifested this essential quality at the Morogoro Conference of 1969. That conference was a historical milestone. After a careful and searching analysis and an open discussion decisions were taken which have had a positive impact on the course of the revolutionary struggle. One such decision was to set up a Revolutionary Council which was entrusted with the task of improving the underground structures of the ANC, strengthening the capacity of Umkhonto-We-Sizwe to meet the fire-power of the enemy with the fire-power and superior tactics of the guerillas, and relating the armed struggle to the mass actions of the working people. Oliver Tambo was unanimously and enthusiastically elected chairman and Dadoo vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Council. Since its formation in 1969 the Revolutionary Council has considerably heightened the activities of the ANC underground and Umkhonto-We-Sizwe. In his post Dadoo has worked tirelessly and selflessly, never sparing himself.

As a leading member of the SACP Dadoo was also occupied by his Party duties and functions. In August 1972 J. B. Marks, then chairman of the SACP, died and was buried (in his own words) "in the land of the proletariat". At a CC meeting soon after Marks' death, Dadoo was unanimously elected chairman. He says that his election was a great honour and a heavy responsibility; more so since he had to follow the high standard of leadership set by Marks. However, once he took on this responsibility he made and continues to make valuable contributions to the extension of the Party's influence and position inside and outside the country.

In the continuing work to heighten the political and revolutionary consciousness of the people, underground literature plays a pre-eminent role. It acts as a mobiliser, organiser, stimulator, and catalyst. Both the ANC and SACP have produced a vast quantity of underground resistance literature. Even the enemy has been compelled to admit that the consistent production and distribution of illegal propaganda material by various means, including bucket bombs, has made an impact on the country. Our brave underground fighters take great risks to prepare and distribute this material. A number of them have been arrested, tortured, imprisoned and killed, but the work continues.

The national liberation front, headed by the ANC and of which the SACP is an integral part, has played its rightful role in the rapidly developing situation in racist South Africa, despite deep illegality and certain shortcomings and weaknesses. Whether in the massive strikes of the black working class, the ferment of revolt amongst the youth and students, or the resistance in the rural areas, the contribution of members of the national liberation, trade union and working class movements has been significant. A large number of young people who have left South Africa to acquire political and military skills have testified to the influence of the ANC.

### **Soweto Explosion**

The uprisings in Soweto and other parts of the country in June 1976 shattered for all time the propaganda of the racists that South Africa is an ocean of peace. The oppressed, down-trodden youth and students demonstrated not only their utter rejection of racism and apartheid but most significantly their readiness to make the supreme sacrifice. Workers, youth, students, professionals and small traders came out in united mass action.

In the recent period militant actions on a wide variety of issues, by black working people in the urban and rural areas, youth and students and other strata of the population have intensified. Moreover, the underground structures of the ANC, SACP and SACTU have been strengthened and the fighting qualities of Umkhonto-We-Sizwe have been displayed in action. Even the enemy has been compelled to admit that South Africa is in a "state of war". Numerous armed clashes have occurred between the freedom

fighters and the forces of racism, repression and murder. In some of the clashes units of Umkhonto have inflicted wounding blows on the enemy troops and eliminated traitors and informers such as Abel Mtembu and L. Nkosi.

Dadoo's political life, like that of so many outstanding revolutionaries throughout the world, proves irrefutably that one can only be a true patriot if one is an internationalist. Dadoo emphasises that class unity is essential both on the national and international scale. Imperialism and the national forces of reaction will do their utmost — including the use of terroristic violence — to protect their interests. Thus it is not possible to dispense with the most potent weapon of the international working class, proletarian internationalism.

In the course of his political duties Dadoo has represented the SACP at various congresses, conferences and seminars in the socialist countries. He went to the Soviet Union for the first time in 1960. When his plane landed at the airport in Moscow his heart beat faster. He was tremendously excited and overjoyed that at long last he was in the motherland of Lenin, where the material base for socialism had been established. His love for the Soviet people and the CPSU had grown steadily stronger over the years. For Dadoo, as for millions of people, the Soviet Union is the main bulwark of all those fighting for a new and better life free from capitalism, imperialism, neo-colonialism, racism and fascism.

In contrast to the principled class positions of the socialist community headed by the Soviet Union, the Chinese leaders in Peking have betrayed the most sacred principles of socialism and proletarian internationalism. Dadoo represented the ANC at the representative conference held in Helsinki in March 1979 in support of Vietnam after the criminal aggression and brazen banditry of the Chinese invaders. In his speech he said: "By their actions the Chinese leadership have entered into an unholy alliance with the most reactionary and warmongering forces of imperialism. In Chile, Angola, Ethiopia, wherever the people are fighting against imperialism and reaction, they find ranged against them the Peking leadership".

Dadoo led a delegation of the SACP to Congo (Brazzaville) in November 1975. During this highly successful visit they met leading

officials of the Congolese Party of Labour and the government. In a joint communique after the visit both parties agreed to develop contacts and to help each other in the struggle for socialism. In 1977 Dadoo had the honour and pleasure to be part of the world Peace delegation which presented the Julio-Curie Medal to Agostinho Neto in Luanda. \*

Dadoo as always remains a firm champion of the might and strength of the international communist movement. Within the ranks of the Party and internationally he is a tireless fighter for the unity and cohesiveness of the world communist movement. On behalf of the SACP he attended the 1960 and 1969 international meetings of the Communist and Workers' Parties and the recent historic first meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties of Tropical and Southern Africa. He reads extensively and is well-informed about developments in Africa, the socialist world, Middle East, Asia and Latin America. In many ways Dadoo is a symbol of the internationalism of the oppressed people of South Africa.

Dadoo draws his political strength and dynamism above all from the black working class which is the main social force for national liberation and socialism. In his political life he has always attempted to draw the widest possible sections of the oppressed blacks and democratic whites into the mainstream of the struggle. An implacable foe of sectarianism and exclusivism Dadoo has made an immeasurable contribution to the significant role played by the Indians in the revolutionary struggle.

Dadoo's political life is indeed A Proud Record of Struggle. Notwithstanding the drawbacks, weaknesses and retreats of the revolutionary forces, Dadoo on the basis of a scientific evaluation of the scope, depth and potential of the national liberation and working class movements and the fierce opposition of the oppressed to racism and apartheid is supremely confident that as surely as spring follows winter the popular Congress slogan "Freedom In Our Lifetime" will become a reality.

(Essop Pahad is working on a biography of Yusuf Dadoo which will be published later this year — Ed.)

# AFTERTHOUGHTS ON SOWETO

by R. S. Nyameko

A brief comparison between South Africa's Soweto uprising of 1976 and the famous Russian Revolution of 1905 helps to put our uprising in a wider social perspective.

The 1905 Revolution occurred after the defeat suffered by the Tsarist armies at the hands of a rising Japanese imperialism. The South African revolt followed the defeat inflicted on South African white troops by the revolutionary MPLA army and its socialist allies, as well as the victory of Frelimo in Mozambique.

There is a further point of similarity. Tsarist Russia, like South Africa, was not a democratic capitalist state. Its political and social institutions were semi-feudal and rested upon an economic base consisting of an advanced industrial structure combined with feudalistic and patriarchal forms of production in agriculture and small-scale manufacturing.

The system of small peasant holdings that exists in the reserves, the dependence of the rural African population on wages earned by

migrant workers, the relations between white landowners and African farm labourers and the complete denial of political and civic rights to the majority of South Africans have striking parallels in Tsarist Russia.

The 1905 Revolution began as a series of strikes by factory workers. Following a big strike wave in 1901-2, the Tsarist police fostered the establishment of workers' unions under the leadership of police spies and agents provocateur. The principal inspirer of these dummy unions was Zubatov, head of the Moscow political police the okhrana – and his policy of forming workers' unions came to be known as 'Zubatovism'. He actually founded a Society for the Mutual Help of Workers in the engineering industry under strict police supervision. It went so far as to pull off strikes against unpopular employers, including firms owned by foreign capitalists. In a counter-move, employers organised factory committees or 'house unions' under their own control.

After Zubatov was dismissed at the end of 1903 his methods were abandoned in Moscow, but a similar movement was launched by the priest Father Georgij Gapon with the blessing of the Government. He established an Assembly of Russian Factory Workers in St Petersburg in February 1904, to draw workers away from the socialists and their underground trade unions.

The Assembly provided various benefit services and received subsidies from public funds, but it soon took on the functions of a genuine trade union. With the rise in the cost of living during the Russo-Japanese war and other hardships, workers joined the Assembly in great numbers and branches were formed in all big towns. Thus when the first strike occurred in January 1905 in the Putilov works, St. Petersburg, Russian workers were familiar with the aims and methods of trade unions, even though the official ones were under the control of police or employers. The Putilov strike was a spontaneous resistance to the dismissal of four workers, and soon received widespread support.

Gapon's Assembly of Russian Factory Workers was also drawn into the struggle, exactly as had been predicted by Lenin and his Social Democratic Party comrades<sup>1</sup>.

The St. Petersburg workers advanced rapidly to a broad economic platform by putting up demands for an eight-hour day, a minimum



wage, the abolition of overtime work, double pay for overtime work, improvement of sanitary conditions and medical aid.

Developing into a general strike in St. Petersburg, the movement assumed a political character. Meetings of strikers, in which Social Democratic Party members participated, passed resolutions demanding political rights. This led to the drafting of a petition to the Tsar for democratic rights, the relief of poverty and constraints on the oppression of labour by capital.

On Sunday, 9 January, 1905, Gapon led a monster procession to the Winter Palace to present the petition to the Tsar, but the demonstrators were received instead by the Tsar's soldiers, who shot at the unarmed men, women and children, killing and wounding thousands. Lenin, living in exile in Geneva, commented:

"It was a dastardly, cold blooded massacre of defenceless and peaceful people. For a long time to come, the masses will think over and relive in memory and in story all that took place"<sup>2</sup>.

Workers all over Russia reacted immediately by strikes and demonstrations. By May, 1905, more than 200,000 workers struck in the big industrial areas including Riga, Warsaw and Lodz.

Lenin noted the "amazingly rapid shift of the movement from the purely economic to the political ground, the tremendous solidarity and the energy displayed by hundreds of thousands of proletarians – and all this, notwithstanding the fact that conscious Social Democratic influence is lacking or is but slightly evident"<sup>3</sup>.

Lenin's observations on the limited range of Social Democratic influence at that stage should be appreciated against the background of the long-maintained dispute in the SDP over the role of trade unions. A faction of the SDP urged that unions should concentrate on the improvement of wages and working conditions so as to lay a strong foundation for working-class organisations.

Lenin denounced this approach, which he called 'Economism', and urged that revolutionary trade unions should combine economic and political demands in a struggle for the overthrow of Tsarism and the establishment of a workers' state. Nothing less than the destruction of capitalism could liberate the workers from wage slavery, but to destroy capitalism the people had to destroy the Tsarist autocracy. In reply to his critics, he rejected their argument

that trade union organisation would lead to a spontaneous acceptance of socialism.

"Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." If the Socialists failed to teach scientific socialism, capitalist ideology would fill the vacuum. Economism was bound to end up in reformism and destroy the revolutionary spirit, as in western capitalist societies, where revisionists were doing their best to destroy Marxism<sup>1</sup>.

### South African Situation

I do not imply that our South African situation is of the same order as Tsarist Russia in 1905. On the contrary, I have made this extensive reference to the 1905 Revolution for the purpose of emphasising certain contrasts.

In the first place the South African revolt was initiated and led by young intellectuals who raised political demands. Secondly, action by the working class followed and did not precede the students' revolt. Thirdly, the struggle of the students was not linked with the demands of the working people. The issues on which the Soweto uprising turned were not working-class issues. They were not directly concerned with wages, unemployment, trade union rights and the right to do skilled work.

The issues the students brought to the fore were highly political issues. Their demands dealt with the distribution of power. Raising political consciousness, rejecting the identities pushed down our throats by the white minority, they declared: "We are not Xhosa or Zulu, we do not want Bantustans".

Looking back on the situation, many people have asked. Does the South African workers' political consciousness lag behind that of their children?

We need to make a correct diagnosis if we wish to avoid fantasies that lead us into prescribing wrong treatment. We must neither *overestimate* nor *underestimate* the revolutionary forces at home. Have we underestimated the revolutionary zeal of the intelligentsia whilst exaggerating the revolutionary spirit and political awareness of the working class?

Lenin in *What Is To Be Done?* frankly drew attention to the 'unpreparedness' of the Social Democrats — both in their 'theories'

and in their activity; they failed to establish a constant and continuous organisation capable of leading the whole movement.<sup>5</sup>

By comparison with the Russian workers in 1905, did we react adequately in protest against the police brutality, against the hundreds murdered and the thousands maimed and arrested on 'Bloody Wednesday', 16 June? Did our failure to take independent action display a serious lack of revolutionary workers' *leadership* and organisation?

Our people do not lack political maturity or understanding. There is no slavish submissiveness to the white government, Vorster is not a 'Little Father', as the Tsar was for the Russian people. Black people, whether moderate or conservative, reject and detest the white government. There are no traditional ties that bind black people to the rulers of Pretoria. The only tradition is that of bitter anger towards the white rulers. Black workers are not bound by religion, customs and traditions to the white rulers, and can only be in a constant state of hostility towards them.

Trade union bureaucrat Lucy Mvubelo may feel differently. In an interview with the Afrikaans paper *Rapport* (18.1.76) she said: "Mr Vorster is a great statesman and a good Prime Minister." But millions of our people will remember that Vorster and his government were responsible for the murder of over 1,000 young men and women, that they tortured twenty to death and maimed and imprisoned thousands in the Soweto revolts. Who, besides stooges like Mvubelo, will describe as a "good Prime Minister" the man who created the police state and produced the most draconian laws on racial discrimination and oppression?

Apartheid denies our people the ordinary rights of citizenship, refuses the right to trade union organisation and collective bargaining, discriminates against them at work, segregates them residentially, denies them access to recreation and cultural facilities and provides them with inferior health facilities, social services and education for their children. Urban Africans have no security of work and of residence.

Our politically conscious trade unionists, leaders in the factories, have been detained, imprisoned to prevent them from giving the workers political leadership. That was the Nazi technique. Our trade unions have had this treatment since the Nats came to power nearly

thirty years ago. Ben Schoeman, the first Nat Minister for Labour, laid down the Government's policy of "bleeding the African trade unions to death."

### **Savage Repression**

We must never overlook the tremendous difficulties faced by our working class: the savage repression, the lack of trade union rights, the absence of authentic trade unions owing to the disorganising activities of the fascist state, the severe restrictions on the political vanguard of the workers — all of which have hampered organised workers' action.

Nor should we forget the terrible load the individual worker has to carry. He is the main breadwinner. Any African worker who strikes is liable not only to lose his job but also to lose his home, to be endorsed out of town and banished to some "homeland" where there is no land for him and unemployment is chronic. Most students are not faced with these problems, or at least not to the same extent as their parents.

We do not want to diminish in any way the students' achievement. The uprising they initiated raised our struggle to a new level. It reinforced the consciousness that racial superiority is a myth and that whoever accepts it assists in the perpetuation of racialism and apartheid. The youth lit a new flame of liberation throughout South Africa, raised the banner of revolt against the wrongs, humiliations and brutality of more than 300 years of racist tyranny. The revolt of the young has left an indelible mark and will be a major chapter in our record of struggle for social justice, freedom and equality.

At the same time, we have to acknowledge that the fight of the young militants, despite the highly successful strikes which they succeeded in bringing off with the workers in Soweto, Cape Town and elsewhere, did not hit the system hard enough at the point of production of profit and surplus value. For example, there was no industrial action in Durban and its surrounding areas. People said: "This is Buthelezi's country; he has support amongst the workers, while Indian workers will not come out on their own". And what did Buthelezi do? At the start of the uprising he called for 'calm', and when the first strike took place in Soweto he denounced the students' action in keeping the workers away from work, saying: "If black

workers want to go to work they should arm themselves with sticks against those who want to keep them out".

And this also reminds us that our workers are divided according to skin colour and racial status. Many Coloured and Indian and most white workers, who have a higher status and more rights under industrial laws, refuse to identify or co-operate with African workers. Racial prejudice is so deeply rooted that three unions — one with mixed membership of white and coloured and the other two unions of Coloured and Indian workers — disaffiliated from the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA) because it took a resolution against job reservation. Mr Moham Lalarem of the National Union of Furniture and Allied Workers tried to justify himself by saying: "We don't agree with the Council's policy. We are not racist, but we are acting in the best interests of our members. We must protect the jobs of Coloured and Asian workers in metropolitan areas".

White workers consistently use the same plea of self-interest to defend their policy of discrimination against African, Coloured and Asian workers, as was recently demonstrated by the strike of white mineworkers in protest against the employment of Coloureds in jobs previously reserved for whites. Although Coloured and Asian workers complain of discrimination by whites, many of them and their unions nevertheless join hands with white workers to discriminate against African workers.

### **Workers' Action**

Workers' strikes and action of the kind we envisage require not only political consciousness and understanding, but organised leadership at the point of production. The state's laws and police action deprived the workers of political leadership

And here we can mention too the inglorious role of TUCSA which during all those months of police terror in 1976-77 behaved as if it was operating on another planet. It did not utter a word of protest against the murder of innocent children, against the detentions and killings of trade unionists and others who were tortured to death in the Gestapo cells of the government.

But we know the workers are ready to strike for economic demands. In spite of all the repression and restrictions, they have downed tools repeatedly for higher wages, against victimisation of

their leaders and for trade union recognition. They have acted with marvellous solidarity and tenaciousness in innumerable strikes and bus boycotts. During the Soweto uprising a large measure of success was achieved by the students' call for a boycott of consumer goods, disclosing the enormous potential that exists for mass campaigns capable of projecting the issues of importance to the working people provided the correct leadership is given. This was also proved during the successful mass action of students and adults against the unjust rent increases in Soweto in April 1977.

In our propaganda and agitational work we must link the demands for economic improvements with our political demands. We must specifically include such issues as mass unemployment, the denial of unemployment insurance to African workers, the right to do skilled work, abolition of the industrial colour bar, the fight for higher wages, the right to organise trade unions, and the right to collective bargaining.

At all times it is our duty to explain to the workers that they cannot liberate themselves from wage slavery and from all the colour bar humiliations, unless and until they overthrow the system of capitalism, in which is embodied class exploitation, race and national oppression.

The influence and prestige of the socialist countries is growing. We must build unions with class-conscious leaders determined to remove capitalism. We must project to the working people of South Africa the vision of working-class rule, not a continuation of the capitalist system which dooms the majority of people to poverty and suffering.

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[This is a discussion article. The editorial board of *The African Communist* invites further contributions from readers on the subject of the Soweto uprising and the role of the working class and trade unions in the South African revolution.]

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# **DROUGHT AND THE ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION**

**by Solomon Terfa**

The suffering of the Ethiopian people from the effects of drought and famine were among the factors which contributed to the downfall of the Haile Selassie regime. But drought and famine were themselves a product of the feudal mode of production and the neo-colonial economy of the country.

The term 'feudal' came into use by scholars in the 18th century. It refers to the socio-economic and political set-up of a society at a specific epoch in the history of the development of the means of production. Carl Stephenson points out that, 'neither the English word feudalism nor its equivalent in French seems to have come into use until the latter eighteenth century after the revolution of 1789 had turned scholarly attention to certain prominent features of the Old Regime'.<sup>1</sup>

Having established the origin and usage of the term, we need to define the characteristics of feudalism. Maurice Dobb gives us a 'concise outline' of feudalism as follows:

1. A low level of technique, in which the instrument of production is simple and inexpensive and the act of production is largely individual in character, the division of labour being at a very primitive level of development.
2. Production for the immediate need of the household or village community and not for a wider market.
3. Demesne-farming: farming of the lord's estate, often on a considerable scale by compulsory labour services.
4. Political decentralization.
5. Conditional holding of land by lords on some kind of service-tenure.
6. Possession by a lord of judicial or quasi-judicial functions in relation to the dependent population.<sup>2</sup>

Dobb considers a system which has the above characteristics to be the 'classic' form of feudalism. Hence we should not be shocked or intrigued to discover most of these characteristics in Haile Selassie's feudal Ethiopia with one main exception: Haile Selassie's government was 'centralized'.

Almost all Ethiopianists of any school of thought are agreed that Ethiopia has all the necessary pre-requisites to make her the 'granary for all Africa and the Middle East'.<sup>3</sup> It is a tragedy that a country which used to depend solely on agriculture, a country which was and still is known for its fertility, favourable climatic conditions and abundant rainfall, should have been cultivating less than 10%<sup>4</sup> of the available land, producing insufficient food for its inhabitants.

The land tenure system and the almost primitive method of farming were among the main causes of this predicament. The Royal family, the aristocracy, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Balabats and the generals were the only beneficiaries of the fruits of the land for they owned most of the arable land. While a great percentage of the land of the Imperial Government was found in the south especially in Hararge, Bale and Sidamo provinces (where 79%, 81% and 75% respectively belonged to the Emperor) the bulk of the Church land was found in the communally owned areas of the north, viz. Tigre, Begemder and Gojam. In general approximately half of the land in Shoa, Wollo, Wellega, Arussi, Hararge, Illubabor, Kaffa, Sidamo, Gamu-Gofa and Bale provinces was under private

ownership while the other half was claimed by the Government and the Orthodox Church.<sup>5</sup>

Thus the peasants were relegated to landlessness which meant that peasant farmers usually became tenants owing to the smallness of their holdings and were forced to live under a so-called protection provided by big feudal lords. In return, the tenant farmers owed tribute and tithe to the emperor and rent to the landlord. The peasant also owed both produce and service to the governor and soldiers in his district<sup>6</sup>. The tenant farmers in Ethiopia lived in the most degrading condition, economically exploited, politically oppressed and suppressed and socially alienated and rejected.

Consequently, Ethiopia became a country of small farmers. Some 85 per cent of the population of thirty million were small farmers and there were estimated to be about four million farmers with a mean size per farm holding of 2.5 hectares. A recent survey in Gamu-Gofa province showed that ninety-two per cent of the cultivated holdings were less than one hectare in size and all were less than five hectares in size. Data for other provinces were comparable.<sup>7</sup>

### **Minimal Technology**

It should be stressed that the productivity of the peasant in Ethiopia was hampered as much by the non-existence of sophisticated tools and implements as by the land tenure system. The unavailability of high level tools and implements and also the dearth of scientific know-how compounded the misery and hardship of the peasantry. Regarding the developmental level of the peasants in Ethiopia, Kaplan and co-authors have this to say:

'In 1970 there were four levels of farm technology, hoe or other hand tools, ox-drawn, semi-mechanized and mechanized. Many subsistence farmers, particularly in lowland river areas and in the south, used only hoes and hand tools to plant and harvest their crops. Weed control was difficult, and yields were low. Ox-drawn plows were the primary means of farming the highlands. Sometimes plows had iron tips, but even they did not work in soil deeply enough to permit optimum water penetration.'

Seeding and harvesting were usually done by hand. Oxen were sometimes used for threshing, but often the sheaves were beaten with sticks. Winnowing was most frequently achieved by throwing grain into the wind and letting the chaff blow away. Milling was often done

by hand with a wooden pestle and mortar or a hand stone-mill. Although carts, wagons and other wheeled vehicles were in use, oxen, camels, horses, mules and donkeys were the major sources of draft power and transportation.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the outdated and outmoded implements, the peasant's problem was further aggravated by insufficient rainfall. A country which is famous for its many rivers and lakes had been made to depend in most instances on rainfall, while its famous rivers, Blue Nile and Gash, have been used to provide irrigation for both Egypt and the Sudan.<sup>9</sup>

As a result of the land tenure system and the low level of the tools and implements used by the people, the tenant farmers were able to produce only for subsistence. Despite the country's dependence on agriculture, the feudal regime had not done anything to improve this sector. Thus it is not surprising that drought and famine invaded Ethiopia and killed its inhabitants.

The neo-colonial economy of the country was another cause for the emergence of drought and famine. Some western social scientists argue that imperialism promoted economic development in the colonies, thus improving living standards. But when faced with the fact that these colonies are underdeveloped relative to the imperialist countries, their response is that the people in the underdeveloped countries are lazy and do not have the work ethic etc.

Some writers argue that since Ethiopia's economy is predominantly feudal and backward, its appeal and lure for imperialism are insignificant. However, the reality is that:

'... the profit incentive ... the essence of capitalism is the underlying cause of the present process of underdevelopment ... And capitalism is, indeed, not particularly an Ethiopian phenomenon but a world-political and economic system, which benefits a few and exploits a majority of which the Ethiopian masses constitute a part. Consequently, the commercial development is an extension of international capitalism as such and not an isolated Ethiopian case.'<sup>10</sup>

The fact is that 80 to 90 per cent of Ethiopia's labour force was engaged in subsistence agriculture, while the development of the industrial and manufacturing sector was predominantly under the control of USA, England, Holland, Japan and other imperialist countries.<sup>11</sup>

## Foreign Capital

Although there is no available data as to the overall level of foreign investment in industry, it is believed that private investment exceeded government investment and that much of the private investment in industry and trade was foreign in origin.<sup>12</sup>

This dependency on foreign capital was expressed in the Third Five Year Plan, which stated that encouragement of foreign capital was paramount to make sure that Eth. \$3.45 million was obtained to expand the economy.<sup>13</sup> However, past experience had shown this was to the disadvantage of the economy of Ethiopia. This situation resulted from the extremely liberal agreements the government was forced to sign. For instance, Handels Veriging Amsterdam (sugar industry) had been 'allowed to remit 10 per cent of its capital yearly and 15 per cent of its annual profit which implies a guarantee of export of capital of Eth. \$8 million'.<sup>14</sup> In addition to this, H.V.A. Ethiopia had been excused from paying the usual 2 per cent export tax while all imported goods are free of tax.<sup>15</sup>

'The effect of the local production of sugar on the Ethiopian economy during the 1957-1971 period is uncertain, but my own calculations indicate that H.V.A. Ethiopia has not had any noticeable effect on the country's balance-of-payment during the last 18 years. It is even possible that the net effect has been an outflow of capital'.<sup>16</sup>

Preferring neo-colonialism to economic independence, under-development to development, stagnation to progress, the Haile Selassie government sold out not only the land but also the labour force at a cheap price. This relegated the country to a subservient status, one consequence of which was recurring drought and famine.

Because of the lack of concern of their unrepresentative administration, the Ethiopians have suffered many agonizing tortures of which famine was the most serious. It is agreed that the cause of famine is partly natural and partly artificial. However, thanks to the people's ingenuity and technological development, famine which once was the universal enemy of the world can now be overcome. The development of the productive forces is the key to overcoming major obstacles and problems.

Haile Selassie's Ethiopia had been left at the mercy of nature. When famine invaded the country, the priests were told to pray so that the divine punishment might stop. The divine punishment, they

said, was the result of the unethical conduct and impiety of the students who had lost respect and reverence for the 'state' and the 'church'. The answer to economic problems was sought in metaphysics, not in science. The outlook of life and the philosophy of a people reflect the socio-economic development of their country.

Being aware of the then prevalent mode of production in Ethiopia, we should not be surprised to learn that 'drought is not a new phenomenon in Ethiopia's northern provinces of Tigre, Wollo, North Shoa, Begemder and the Rift area. In the mid-1960s over 250,000 people are believed to have died from drought in Tigre alone'.<sup>17</sup> Thanks to some international and benevolent organizations, the effects of drought and its consequences, famine and epidemic diseases have been mitigated at times, although not before having claimed many thousands of lives.

### **Loss of Life**

The recent drought<sup>18</sup> claimed, accorded to one official of UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) over 100,000 lives and affected as many as three million people.<sup>19</sup> Those who suffered the most were the peasantry and tenant farmers. The land tenure system obligated the tenant farmers to give 50-75 per cent of their produce to the landlord, leaving them with the remainder to meet the responsibilities of their families and most of the time the extended family. For instance in Wollo, the hardest hit of the drought-stricken provinces, there were, it is estimated, 375,000 landless settlers of whom 150,000 leased land. And over 90,000 of these tenants had to submit 50-75 per cent of their produce to the landlord.<sup>20</sup>

The drought hurt not only the landless and the tenant farmers, but also the small land-owning peasants whose production had been curtailed by the drought, forcing them to sell their lands and cattle.

'To make matters worse the starving famine victims were often exploited unscrupulously by traders and some officials. They were sometimes forced to sell their livestock, crops or land at rock-bottom prices and then to buy the grain at grossly inflated cost. Some officials sold emergency feeding cards which should have been distributed free. Peasants who were lured away from their land by promises of free food and seed sometimes perished on their journey'.<sup>21</sup>

Despite all the suffering and agonizing torment, the landlord-comprador bourgeoisie government did nothing to alleviate the



condition of the people. In fact the government suppressed any news about famine until it was exposed by concerned citizens and international organizations. Professors Solomon Inquai, Seyoum Gabre-Egziabher and Mesfin Wolde Mariam who were the first to expose the existence of drought and the need to take precautionary measures were all thrown out of the university.

'The Emperor's response was to designate Mesfin Wolde Mariam to be Governor of Gimbe in Wollega Province under a Governor-General known to be strongly hostile to him. Dr. Gebre Egziabher was dispatched as a mayor of Gondar and Inquai as a cultural Attache in Moscow'.<sup>22</sup>

During that emergency, when giving aid would have counted more than receiving it, the government led by the Emperor himself was thinking only about the land tax they were unable to collect. The Emperor went on the national radio and put forth his programme to the drought-stricken parts as a gesture. '(He) singled out for mention as a positive step the cancellation of land tax in those areas hit by the drought . . .'.<sup>23</sup>

Consider the pitiable condition of the famine victims, most of them on their death-bed. Was not the Emperor's 'concession' in fact an admission that the government's initial intention to make them pay the land tax was illegal and unjust? The government's profession of concern was fraudulent, reminding one of the Ras (Duke) who once said: 'We (meaning the nobility) don't care about the people but the land'.

### **Commission Report**

Corroboration of this interpretation of the government's motives was provided by the findings of the commission which was appointed to investigate corruption and abuse of power. The commission reported that:

'The Governor of Wollo province wrote a letter to the Emperor in August 1970, asking that action be taken to save the lives of thousands of starving peasants. The Governor had already pressed the former Premier Aklilu Habte-Wold and the Crown Prince Asfa Wossen who was the nominal ruler of Wollo province to take action but to no avail'.<sup>24</sup>

The problems were further exacerbated by lack of transport and paved roads which could have made it possible to transport food from one locality to another. The so-called 'centralized government' had no infrastructure even for its own purposes. It is no exaggeration

to state that one-third of Ethiopia's population lived and continues to live 30 kms from the nearest road. All in all, there are 8,000 kms of road, of which only one-third is tarred.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to this, the *Africa Institute Bulletin* in its 'Facts and Figures' points out that,

'The inadequate social infrastructure in the country is not only reflected in the field of education but also in the health services which leave much to be desired. Ethiopia has (had) one doctor for every 65,300 persons and after Upper Volta and Chad has (had) the poorest doctor inhabitant ratio in Africa. In 1970, there was one hospital bed for every 3,128 persons in Ethiopia which at that stage reflected the poorest position in Africa.'<sup>26</sup>

Many of the hospitals and clinics are in the cities, serving a small minority, leaving the great majority — the country — at the mercy of local and indigenous medicine. This often resulted in either the deterioration of the illness or the death of the person under treatment. In any case, it can be argued that it was the corruption and the mismanagement of the famine relief which exposed the inability of the government to cope with the problems, leaving it discredited in the eyes of the students, workers, peasants and soldiers.<sup>27</sup>

Although it was the famine that incited the people to revolt, it would be wrong to assume that it was the only cause that prompted the populace to rise up. For instance, the drought and its consequences have to be studied in relation to the sky-rocketing prices. Outside conditions also facilitated and increased the internal antagonism. The blockade and then increase of the oil price by the Arab countries had an effect on Ethiopia's economy as it did all over the world.

*News Week* reported:

'Just how ineffectual Selassie had become was demonstrated by the government's ineptitudeness (sic) in dealing with the drought that swept across the country . . . Millions of cattle died, crops were decimated and perhaps 100,000 starved to death . . . As a result of the drought food prices rose abruptly. Then because of Arab oil politics the cost of gasoline skyrocketed'.<sup>28</sup>

As a result of government negligence, the downtrodden and the oppressed masses were forced to go on a street demonstration to protest against their life-long sufferings under the autocratic rule of Haile Selassie. Desperate and frustrated peasants refused to hand

over the expected 50-75 per cent portion of their crops to the landlords.<sup>29</sup> This rebellion spread to every sector of life in the country.

### **Role of the Working Class**

Although, due to the nature of the then prevalent mode of production, the size of the working class or proletariat was (still is) small and thus its historic role was limited, its participation in the February popular uprising and its contribution to the downfall of Haile Selassie was important. The reformist demands of the labour union were regarded by the government as revolutionary and detrimental to the established constitution of the country.

'The first trade union strike with demands not only for substantial wage increase but for fundamental reforms were embodied in a 10-point manifesto . . . It included demands for a new constitution, land reform, improved labour laws, free education and opportunity for all, price controls, political parties, a free press and vocational training for soldiers'.<sup>30</sup>

At this opportune time, the dedicated Ethiopian students who had been playing a catalytic role since 1965 by raising the level of political consciousness of the people – with of course untold sacrifice in lives and imprisonment – came out demanding 'land to the tiller'. In addition to this, 'the student body at the University of Addis Ababa decided to forego their breakfast demanding that the savings should be used to provide drought relief and that a national state of emergency be declared to help the victims'.<sup>31</sup>

As a result of the death of cattle and decimated crops, the money-lovers and get-rich-quick traders raised the prices of butter and other foodstuffs to a height beyond the reach of the ordinary citizen. The students won respect and sympathy from the consumers when they acted as inspectors and self-appointed police of the people.

'They would go up to a trader and ask him how much he charged for such foods as butter. Faced by their intimidating number, the trader would quote a figure much below the going price'.<sup>32</sup>

The protracted and effective contribution of the Ethiopian students is without parallel. Not only did they help in street demonstrations; they also helped in writing leaflets and articles exposing the social problems that needed solution. They showed that a mere change in the personalities of leaders was useless. For instance, the replacement

of Aklilu, the former Prime Minister, by Endalkatchew, an aristocrat, was for them a sour pill to swallow.

'About 300 students marched on the office of the Prime Minister Endalkatchew Mekonnen shouting slogans for his removal and carrying imitation gallows'.<sup>33</sup>

The non-existence of a political party, in this case a revolutionary communist party, had burdened the Ethiopian students to play the role to whatever degree they could. It had convinced them of the need to raise certain social issues and demands and try to find solutions to the problems that were facing the society. However, owing to their petty bourgeois background their ability to fill the role of the vanguard of the movement was limited. Had there been a communist party to combat spontaneity and divert the action of the working class the result would have been very different.

As prices were rapidly rising and the purchasing power of the consumer was deteriorating, the need to protest grew sharply. The unrest spread to civilians. There were strikes by the taxi-drivers protesting against the increased petrol prices. Teachers and students also protested against increasing prices.<sup>34</sup>

The growing protest movement was later to engulf the military and the police force, a section of whom joined the workers, peasants, students, teachers, etc. in a coalition to abolish the power of the monarchy and the church.

However, it was the uncompromising stand and the unflinching spirit of the masses which forced the military and the police force to recognise the need for change in society. Women marching on the streets of Addis Ababa asking for an end of male supremacy and domination (which was in fact the ideology of the ruling class) at the same time asked for equal rights.<sup>35</sup> Priests parading the street asked for a pay rise and better living conditions;<sup>36</sup> and the until-then downgraded and rejected Moslem population came on the streets calling on 'their Christian brothers to stand together and work in unity for the progress of the motherland'.<sup>37</sup> This was the tide that the military could not avoid joining to bring about change.

Thus on July 2, 1974, they declared their intention.

'The fight against feudalism was now on and the Armed Forces would pursue the objectives they set out to fulfil during February when the current military and social upheavals began . . .'<sup>38</sup>

With their motto 'Ethiopia First'<sup>39</sup> they pledged that, 'Ethiopia must reach the level of progress other countries of the world have reached and it is not the intention of the Armed Forces to isolate it from the rest of the world community . . .'<sup>40</sup>

In order to accomplish what they proposed, getting the feudal nobility or 'the enemies of the people'<sup>41</sup> out of the way was of paramount importance. This was also found to be very effective in neutralizing the Emperor leaving him in a precarious position.

When 'Dr. Milton Obote (the previous president of Uganda) in February 1971 asked Haile Selassie about the possibility of the military coming to power, the Emperor replied: 'As far as Ethiopia is concerned it is the will of the people that matters and not the leaders themselves',<sup>42</sup>

It is beyond any doubt that it is the iron will of the people that ended his autocratic rule.

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# **AFRICA NOTES & COMMENTS**

## **Congo: Denis Gasso Nguesso takes over**

The 1963 Trois Glorieuses revolution saw the overthrow of the reactionary regime of Fulbert Albert Youlou and President Marien Ngouabi became the new head of state. He worked hard to modernise Congo-Brazzaville, introducing new social and production relations, mapping out a democratic domestic and foreign policy and the ruling party, the Parti Congolais du Travail (PCT) came to adopt Marxism-Leninism as its official ideology. Since those days in the 60s Congo Brazzaville has gone a long way. When the imperialists assassinated President Marien Ngouabi in March 1977, they thought they would stop this process.

But it must be stated that Congo faces serious problems of an economic and social nature. These are problems which face any former colonial country especially when its leadership is determined to bring about new and at times unheard of adjustments and changes.

The question of unequal development of the country, the solution of the national question in a poly-ethnic society, problems of balance of trade, lack of capital, inflation, indiscipline in the production process (absenteeism, strikes etc) and the normalisation of the relationship between the private and the public sector of the economy (the private sector comprises 80% of Congo's economy) are some of the problems facing the young republic.

The 11-man military committee which took over after Ngouabi's assassination appointed Colonel Yhomby-Opango as head of state but the problems still remained unsolved. There was also the added problem of dealing with the 'moderates' who were likely to be used by international imperialism to initiate a coup d'etat. Security was tightened.

But Opango seemed incapable of solving these problems. He had to be removed. In February 1979 he was replaced by Denis Sasso Nguesso a man who is believed to be a staunch advocate of stronger ties with Cuba, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

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## **Ugandan Tanzanian Conflict: Challenge to the OAU**

In our last issue we reported that the conflict between Uganda and Tanzania has caused a lot of unease and insecurity in Africa: Kenya, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire were directly involved, and many others indirectly. On February 21, the OAU mediation committee, comprising the Central African Empire, Gabon, Gambia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Tunisia, Togo, Zaire and Zambia met to try and achieve a ceasefire between Uganda and Tanzania.

Matiya Lubega, the then Ugandan Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, stated that there could be no peace until the 'Tanzanian invaders' had withdrawn their troops from Uganda. On the other hand the Tanzanian Foreign Minister, Benjamin Mkapa, outlined his country's position to the committee stating that: his country expected from the OAU a condemnation of the original invasion of Tanzania by Ugandan forces; that President Amin renounces his claim over Tanzanian territory; that Uganda agrees to

pay compensation to Tanzania for loss of life and property during last November's two-week occupation of Tanzanian land; and that the Ugandan leader should 'cease using Tanzania as a scapegoat for his internal problems'. On February 27, the OAU committee adjourned indefinitely: these were serious problems not capable of immediate solution.

The background to this war is well known. Last October Amin's forces invaded, annexed and occupied Tanzanian territory; they burnt houses, killed many people and committed many atrocities. Tanzania had to fight back and defend her territorial integrity; drive the enemy from her soil, chase and punish him.

The main problem which faces many African states in this question is that this is the first time in post-independence Africa that one country 'attacks' and overthrows the government of another and the African states are worried by the implications. Many questions are being asked. Could the OAU afford to remain neutral in this conflict? Has Tanzania involved itself in the internal affairs of a member state of the OAU? What about the question of sanctity of territorial borders and integrity enshrined in the OAU charter? Who has to decide that a regime is evil and therefore must be removed?

There are no easy answers to these questions which are not mere moral questions. They have to be viewed in the context of a developing national liberation and class struggle in and around Africa. There is no doubt that imperialism and colonialism are responsible for the problems facing our continent. Neo-colonialism is a menace.

Amin's internal policy led to the emergence of an internal opposition: we remember the call by ex-President Milton Obote for Ugandans to rise up and overthrow Amin; there were explosions in early February which damaged a fuel storage tank and electricity installations and silenced Radio Kampala for 2 days. The Save Uganda Movement – a non-denominational and non-ethnic anti-Amin movement whose membership included former army and police officers and intellectuals – claimed responsibility.

On March 22, 1979, 26 Ugandan organisations assembled in Moshi, Tanzania, to map out armed struggle, political struggle and propaganda work against Amin. This Ugandan Unity Conference gave birth to the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) and

elected an executive committee of 11 with Professor Y. K. Lule as chairman. Professor Lule, a former student of Fort Hare in South Africa, is the former Principal of Makerere University and a retired Secretary-General of the Association of African Universities based in Ghana.

It is these forces together with their Tanzanian brothers and sisters who led the struggle for the final overthrow of Amin. Amin himself was a victim of imperialist conspiracies which he could not discern. In trying to overcome some of the problems which faced him and his country he went right into the trap and became a captive, ending up as an agent of reaction on the continent.

The developments in Africa are of a contradictory nature for the simple reason that the African revolution takes a very contradictory form of development. Those who want to survive must learn to discover these contradictions and to solve them in a revolutionary way. Otherwise they will follow the 'example' of Amin

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## **Egypt: legalisation of occupation**

On September 18, 1978 after thirteen days of negotiations the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin signed the Camp David agreement. This agreement is supposed to be a solution to the 30-year-old Middle East crisis. Throughout these negotiations President Carter, the active sponsor, like a hawk in the sky kept a watchful eye. Even before the agreement Sadat had visited Israel.

There is no doubt that this agreement which is meant to strengthen the economic, political and military positions of imperialism in the Middle East by means of the Israeli presence which seeks to impose its will on the Arab people, will affect negatively the developments on the African continent. The conference of Solidarity with the struggle of the African and Arab Peoples Against Imperialism and Reaction which was held in Addis Ababa in September 1978 was meant precisely to thwart and frustrate these imperialist manoeuvres. But Anwar Sadat remained unmoved.

**The Camp David Agreement ignores:**

the question of unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from Arab territories occupied in 1967, including the Golan Heights region of Syria;

the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including their right to set up an independent state;

the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, a fact which has been recognised by the UN, movement of Non-Aligned countries, Arab League, OAU, AAPSO, World Peace Council and especially by the Palestinian people themselves. On the contrary the agreement refers to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank territories as areas 'which will be given the right to full administrative autonomy' in some undefined future or to use Begin's words, the Palestinians on the occupied West Bank of the Jordan River 'will from now on be called Arabs on the land of Israel'. This is a gross violation of the inalienable and legitimate rights to nationhood of the Palestinian people.

Why can't Israel and Egypt organise a referendum on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip on the future of those territories? What about the creation of a Palestinian state and the participation of the PLO in the talks? Why does Begin refer to Jerusalem as 'an indivisible city, the capital of the state of Israel?' Why does the United States want naval bases in the Israeli ports of Haifa and Ashdod and in the Egyptian port of Sharm el Sheik, as well as two air bases in Israel and the Ezion air base in the Sinai?

This agreement is a betrayal of Arab interests and Egypt will pay heavily for that. No wonder the Conference of Arab Foreign and Economic Ministers held in Baghdad at the end of March, 1979 condemned this 'peace' treaty and adopted 23 resolutions demanding political and economic sanctions against the Egyptian government; severance of political and diplomatic relations with Egypt and recall of their envoys; suspension of Egypt's membership of the Arab League, non-aligned movement, Islamic Conference and the OAU.

Sadat has decided to take Egypt out of the revolutionary movement of our times and the agreement will lead to greater dependence on the USA at the expense of Egypt and the Arab world.

The resistance to Sadat's sell out can only mean a demand for a return to the Geneva Conference with the participation of all those involved including the PLO. For our part we must resist Sadat's sell out by fighting for the strengthening of anti-imperialist Afro-Arab unity.





# BOOK REVIEWS

## TRADE UNIONS AT THE CROSSROADS

**Ukubamba Amadolo — Workers' Struggles in the South African Textile Industry.** By Bettie Du Toit. Onyx Press, 1978.

There is a paucity of written South African trade union history, and we welcome every attempt at recording even narrow segments of the workers' struggles. Bettie du Toit's book is a record of organising efforts, strikes, negotiations and economic achievements of the textile workers. Whilst it may be adequate enough for that purpose, it falls down on the job when dealing with the perspectives of the struggle, a failing which is common to many who were deeply embroiled in the hurly-burly on the battle fields. We are unable to look down on the scene from commanding heights and the limitations of the past still dodge our judgments. Yet despite some shortcomings, Bettie du Toit's book throws up reflections and questions and, indirectly, also points at some answers.

The author writes about herself in the third person and gives the impression that she was only a minor element in a collective movement prompted by dedication to social justice. She is not quite fair to herself in this, for she played a leading role in these epic struggles and the record shows her to have been deeply imbued by determination to help the workers to advance and to "better their lot". The noted novelist, Nadine Gordimer, says in her foreword to the book that Bettie du Toit "represents a further stage in human development qua 'humanness' ", but she ascribes this "humanness" to Bettie's "instinctive responses", "miraculously clear of social conditioning". It would, indeed, be a miracle if personalities like Bettie Du Toit were born like Athena fully armed and uttering war cries!

Bettie was "conditioned" and developed in the hard, poverty stricken life of the workers' struggles in the period during and immediately following the great capitalist crisis of the 30's. Like many other trade union organisers and leaders who feature in her history, she had the benefit of close association with the Communist Party of South Africa. Writers and historians who fail to recognise the Communist Party as a powerful "social conditioning" force, a decisive indigenous ingredient of South Africa's political life and history, will have difficulty in explaining the "miracle" of privileged whites who heroically break with their social ties, transcend their prejudices and face persecution and ostracism in total commitment to the struggle for human emancipation. True, that kind of commitment is not unique to communists, but there can be no doubt at all where Bettie's inspiration came from.

The racist ideologists have no difficulty in pinpointing the Communist Party as the foremost organiser of the working class. In their objective to "bleed the African trade unions to death" they struck first at the communists, at people like Bettie du Toit, J. B. Marks, Dan Tloome, Issy Wolfson and numerous others. The successive bans and restrictions on dozens of trade union leaders did have the effect of decapitating the movement, and as Bettie clearly shows, served the interests of greedy and unscrupulous employers. What does transpire from the history is that not enough work had been done in the preceding periods to prepare an alternative leadership and many trade unions suffered grievously as a result.

The book refers to the reactionary role of the white craft unions and their responsibility in sharing in the ruthless exploitation of the African workers. Although it is correct to say that a reactionary labour aristocracy is common to capitalism in every part of the world, insufficient attention has been paid to the part allotted to the white workers in the overall colonialist design in South Africa. Way back in the 19th century the British administration founded the basic principle of apartheid in the maxim: "Every white man shall be a gentleman!" Skilled white workers have not just accepted the bribe of social privileges, but have become the willing political mass basis of fascist colonialism. This mass basis is continuously replenished by recruitment from abroad. Bettie shows, for instance, how Italian artisans rapidly assimilate racist ideas and comfortably adjust themselves as a part of the white supremacy. (Page 73). The organisations of the white workers, TUCSA in particular, act as ambassadors for the regime abroad and are freely allowed to roam the world trying to break through anti-apartheid embargoes. (To their utter disgrace, some black "trade unionists", like Lucy Mvubelo, are willing camp followers in these crusades).

### **African Unions**

Colour divisions, which have bedevilled the South African trade union movement from its earliest days, are the natural product of the special type of colonialism in South Africa. It is, therefore, naive to lament, as the author does, that the white craft unions did not come to the aid of striking African workers (Page 15) The task of building African trade unions is a part of the struggle for national liberation and can only be achieved by the efforts of the African workers themselves. In the last resort only the strength of a truly independent African trade union movement can compel the white workers to rethink their positions and attitudes and the fact that less than 2% of the African working class is organised is one of the major weaknesses in our struggle in South Africa.

On the other hand, the suggestion that the workers' "muscle power" holds all the answers and on its own is enough to destroy colonialism is misleading. History has discredited the illusion of the all-embracing effect of the general strike as the ultimate weapon of the working class. The go-slow strike — *ukubamba amadolo* — as a

modified form is also no panacea on its own. At best it succeeds in "local skirmishes" (Page 126). On the author's own showing the general use of that weapon necessitates a long educative process and the present stage of the struggle has set other, more urgent immediate tasks before trade unionists. The need is for the widest use of all political weapons and all possible initiatives, not least of which is the armed struggle for the seizure of power.

If anything is to be learned from the long arduous struggles of the textile workers, it is that trade unionism and industrial action on their own have only limited effectiveness. African trade unionists must integrate trade union work into the general strategic framework of struggle led by the African National Congress. This is the conclusion drawn by Wilton Mkwayi, one of the organisers of the Textile Workers, in his speech from the dock at the end of his trial in 1964. Wilton is serving a life sentence on Robben Island, and if his sacrifice is not to be in vain, then this is the major lesson which must guide trade unionists in the present situation.

L. E. .

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## **RACE IDEOLOGISTS EXPOSED**

**IQ, Heritability and Racism.** By James Lawler. Published by International Publishers (New York) 1979, 228 pages. Price \$3.95

Jensen, Eysenck and Herrnstein are central figures in what has been a public debate on IQ and heredity and they propagate a theory that Black Americans are intellectually inferior owing to an inborn incapacity to cope with the complex thought processes that IQ tests are supposed to measure. Not so innocently they have implanted this idea in the U.S.A., Britain and the rest of the capitalist world in the name of science and thereby they have given to the racially prejudiced and racist ideologists (whose philosophy the people of the world as a whole have discredited) an uplift through scientific respectability.

*IQ, Heritability and Racism* by James Lawler follows Professor Brian Simon's earlier book on the same issue . Lawler's book is a welcome addition to the arguments against the reactionaries and racists. Lawler's speciality is philosophy and the great strength and value of his book is the philosophical analysis from a dialectical materialist viewpoint on what the concept of intelligence actually incorporates.

The central issue is whether IQ tests measure intelligence. His answer is that they clearly do not do so though they do measure something that approximates to the commonsense concept of intelligence. As a philosopher grounded in dialectical materialism Lawler assesses the empirical facts and challenges the validity of the scientific basis of the conclusions that derive from IQ test results.

Science and commonsense diverge for Lawler as they had to do in the days when most people believed that the earth was flat. The flat earth believers were limited by their experience which was the basis of their commonsense but this did not make their belief a scientific truth. The book begins with an assessment of commonsense beliefs in relation to IQ and distinguishes this from the wider scope of human intellectuality. Lawler maintains that intellect has changed with human social development over the ages.

Lawler's book is a scientific, philosophical analysis of the anti-working class, racist ideology that IQ theory fosters against Black Americans and by implication against all Blacks but more especially those of African origin. The genetic stock from whom American Blacks inherit, after all, is in their African ancestry. This argument, therefore, has implications for the way that all Africans are perceived.

The growth of progressive forces in the U.S.A. in solidarity with the glorious liberation struggle of the Vietnamese people also developed the political consciousness of Americans and led them to challenge the grip on their own lives by the military industrial complex of monopoly capitalism. The political and socio-economic issues of America itself became an issue for mass struggle both in the anti-imperialist and anti-war mobilisation and also internally in the civil rights and workers' movement. For the mass movement the issue was to further the development of the victories of the civil rights struggle which required budgetary allocations to be diverted from

military expenditure and opportunities for Blacks. Jensen, Eysenck and Herrnstein were brought to the fore as a reaction to the gains being made by the Black people and progressive Americans.

The content of their counter-attack has been the IQ-heredity onslaught. They argue to restrict the majority of the working class and to dump the victims of the super exploited, racially discriminated oppressed Blacks on the heap of limited inborn educability. The consequence of slavery, ghetto life and racial oppression has had its effect on the intellectual attainment of Black Americans as a group but the IQ-heredity protagonists make this effect of oppression into the cause of racial discrimination.

Lawler explains the trap that liberal minded environmentalists find themselves in because of their non-dialectical and non-historical approach to what might be called the psychology of underdevelopment. The book is a Marxist critique of I.Q., and Lawler is not sectarian. He discusses Professor Kamin's analysis of the work on twin studies and its importance. Not only do Kamin's studies support Lawler's thesis but in addition Kamin and other like-minded intellectuals approach scientific issues with awareness of the social responsibility of scientists.

Jensen, Eysenck and their ilk are more than socially irresponsible, they consciously provide ammunition for anti-humanitarian and pro-fascist ideologists. They provide the 'scientific basis' for halting projects such as the American educational programme, 'Operation Headstart' which aimed at providing opportunity to overcome the disadvantages of Blacks in the school system by providing an intensive stimulation approach. Its so-called 'failure' because there is no long-term I.Q. change 'due to hereditary limitations' has been used to support educational cuts rather than scientifically evaluate and improve on the deprivations endured by Black Americans and other oppressed national groups in the U.S.A.

### **Historical Facts**

American Blacks with their history of enslavement and servitude helped create the wealth of America and in their status as cotton pickers, servants and workers they were also actively denied access to the educational process that has given white America its intellectual prowess. The I.Q. ideologists ignore this historical fact of the



dehumanising component of slavery and segregated schooling and its stultifying effect on human intellectual potential and instead propagate a theory of hereditarily determined intellectual inferiority. Lawler challenges the claim that IQ tests measure *the essence of intellect* that is 80 percent fixed by inheritance and is therefore essentially unchangeable. The I.Q. ideologists, not so innocently, confuse the concepts 'capability' and 'potential' with attainment and by employing these ideas interchangeably with reference to IQ they evade the issue of defining *intellect* except to say that it is what I.Q. tests measure.

Insofar as IQ has been brought into the armoury of arguments of the racists, Lawler touches on human history – on the development of races, mobility of peoples and the non-existence of any pure race. While there are anthropometric differences between people, *racism* is an ideology. Racist ideology is sharply exposed as a creation of and in the service of capitalism in its imperialist stage of development.

Jensen, Eysenck and Herrnstein through their IQ-heredity theory wish to apply an argument to gloss over the discriminatory and gross exploitative circumstances as well as the vast unemployment condition that Black Americans live under in the midst of the wealth of the industrialized U.S.A. Their argument attempts to resolve the contradiction of the inequality in the so-called 'equal opportunity for all' society. Yet this is a belief that the American people have of their democracy but which is patently untrue as the facts of American life show.

The American right wing and pro-fascist militarist elements find comfort and strength in the argument that if Black Americans are in poorer circumstances in that great 'democracy' it is not the system that is wrong but rather the fault is in those who demand what is their due. They are being obstreperous in demanding more budget expenditure! Such is the logic of reaction.

In *I.Q., Heritability and Racism* Lawler step by step in well illustrated argument explodes both the methodology and philosophy of the I.Q. protagonists. Some of the chapters, especially chapters 8, 9 and 10 contain discussion that often requires a specialist knowledge of statistical theory. Though difficult for the non-specialist reader these chapters challenge the so-called scientific foundation of the I.Q.-heredity theory and as such constitute essential reading. The

non-specialist reader should read through these more difficult sections because in them are the scientific challenge to the arguments which I.Q. ideologists throw at people as their tactic to mystify in the name of science. Lawler clarifies these points and makes the issues comprehensible.

The 181 pages of the book are packed with information and reasoned discussion. In addition, there is a well-organised and lucidly presented account on aspects of human development with special emphasis on the intellectual growth of human beings through various historical phases. Lawler deals with the theoretical issues involved in the philosophy of thinking, issues in the philosophy of science and in the theory of evolution. The theory of natural selection and its misapplication to human beings in the form of Social Darwinism is clarified. The non-dialectical environmentalists lose out because they fail to grasp man's development in the course of production relations which is fundamental to the concept of environment and which influences the process by which man himself is modified.

The book ought to be widely read because it debunks some of the jargon and the negative ideas that are popularised not only to win adherents to racist thinking but also to inculcate into Black people a sense of pessimism and self-denigration in the form of intellectual inferiority. Though this latter objective has been a failure, its propagation is still an onslaught intended to cripple us psychologically. For educationalists and others in the sphere of social planning (especially in the developing countries) the book is an arsenal in the battle against imperialist subversion and reactionary ideas.

**Soobramanium**

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## **INTERNATIONALISM AND THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE**

**Neo-Colonialism and Africa in the 1970's**, Edited by E. A Tarabrin  
(Progress Publishers, Moscow) £2.25

In his preface to the new edition of this book V. G. Solodovnikov, the Soviet Ambassador to Zambia, states: "Until now there has been no special comprehensive study of the policy of neo-colonialism in Africa yet the need for such a work has matured . . . it becomes especially important to make a scientific Marxist study of neo-colonialism to reveal its vulnerable points and determine what the anti-imperialist forces in the developing countries of Africa can do to combat neo-colonialist expansion most effectively."

This wide-ranging and extremely thorough work admirably achieves this purpose, and thus it is a necessary text for all anti-imperialists in Africa struggling against neo-colonialism, as well as for scholars of Africa and for revolutionaries everywhere.

The book, published in English in the latter part of 1978, is an updated revised version of the book which first appeared in 1975. In the new edition, the statistical and factual materials have been brought up to date, and the analysis of the evolution of neo-colonialism and the growth of anti-imperialist struggle has been taken to the middle of 1976. An introductory chapter on the basic directions of the anti-imperialist struggle at its present stage is also included in the new edition as well as new material on the role of international corporations and on the evolution of neo-colonialist tactics up to early 1977.

This work is a collective effort by scholars from the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of Bulgaria under the general editorship of the renowned Soviet Africanist, Evgeny Tarabrin. The group of authors included scholars from the USSR Academy of Sciences' Africa Institute, Leningrad State University and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences' Africa and Asia Research Centre.

Contemporary history in Africa is moving so rapidly that books written a few years ago on Africa can soon be out of date. This book however retains its relevance.

Since early 1977 the continuing successes of the liberation fighters in Southern Africa, the developing revolution in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau, and the stunning victory of the anti-imperialist forces in Ethiopia, all confirm one of the underlying theses of the book, namely that:

"despite all the difficulties and temporary retreats in some areas, the national liberation movement is on the upswing. The specific features of its development at the present stage show very well that the process of revolutionary change in the former colonies and dependent countries can develop in depth and breadth only in close interaction among the various national liberation contingents at every level, and in the unity of all the anti-imperialist forces. But the most decisive condition for its victories is greater solidarity with the socialist world."

After a general outline of the present stage of the anti-imperialist struggle, the book looks at the problems for neo-colonialist strategy in Africa in broad terms. This is followed by an analysis of the way in which neo-colonialism is evolving new methods in the political, economic and ideological spheres to try to keep up with the changing world situation. The essence of these basic changes, the book argues, is to try to turn the former colonies and semicolonies into an integral part of the world capitalist economy, to develop capitalism in the former colonies because the neo-colonialists have realised that "economic stagnation cannot be a real alternative to non-capitalist development." Of course, as the book points out, for the neo-colonialists this is not a question of "abolishing the backwardness of the developing countries or of altering their subordinate position in the world capitalist economy but rather one of turning them into profitable but dependent extensions of the economic systems of the West."

This work examines in detail how the neo-colonialists are putting this into practice. The book is divided into four main parts: one which looks at changes in the balance of forces in Africa and the world, one which examines the economic aspects of neo-colonialism, a section on the ideological expansion of neo-colonialism and one on the present stage of the struggle of the African peoples for independence which includes an excellent section on the national strategy of socialist oriented countries.

Examined in detail are the neo-colonial policies of the United States of America, Britain, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Japan and Israel. There is also an examination of collective neo-colonialism by the EEC countries in Africa.

These chapters contain a wealth of invaluable statistics from the general (that the imperialist powers derive some 18 to 20 thousand million dollars in profit annually from the developing countries) — to particular statistics for each of the major imperialist countries.

Equally useful statistics are provided on the policies of the socialist countries towards the developing countries. For, as the book makes clear, the struggle of African countries against neo-colonialism is integrally related to the struggle between socialism and capitalism on a world-scale.

S.J.



## **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

# **POLITICAL PARTIES IN LESOTHO**

**From Mooketsi K. Seotsanyana, Leipzig, German Democratic Republic**

May I refer to the interview with Mr Jeremiah Mosotho, member of the Lesotho Communist Party, entitled "Lesotho Fights to Strengthen Independence" in *The African Communist* No. 76, First Quarter 1979? It contains a number of falsities and delusions about the situation in Lesotho which can only sour relations between his party and the main progressive party in the country, namely the Basutoland Congress Party, of which I am a member.

1. Mr Mosotho characterises the policy of the Leabua Jonathan regime in the sphere of internal affairs as reactionary and in foreign affairs as progressive, the latter being attributed by him to the collapse of the Portuguese empire in Angola and Mozambique, which can be dated back to the Lisbon army coup of April 25, 1974. It is absolutely untrue that the regime in Lesotho follows an anti-imperialist foreign policy. The Leabua regime actively campaigns for the deeper embroilment of the economy in the world capitalist



system and not for freeing it from the clutches of the imperialist countries.

On paper and on the radio etc. the Leabua regime has always been against the racist policy of the Boer-Brits in South Africa. It is a distortion of the facts to claim that the regime has ever been *for* this policy despite the assistance by Verwoerd in 1965 to bring Leabua into political power and by Vorster during and after the coup d'etat in January 1970.

Mr Mosotho says: "Now, however, after the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire, there has been a measure of change for the better in its foreign policy. It supports the national liberation movements in Southern Africa, is opposed to the South African racist regime. . ."

The increased vocality of the Leabua regime in foreign affairs, specifically its opposition to racist oppression in Southern Africa and the establishment of diplomatic relations with the socialist countries has nothing to do causally with the triumph of MPLA and FRELIMO, which comes at least two years later. By the time the South African Parliament met in 1974 Vorster announced officially and for the first time a decisive change in the attitude and relations of the Boer-Brit government to Jonathan's regime and through that to the B.C.P. and the entire population of Lesotho. South Africa had withdrawn its active support to the Jonathan regime and would no longer intervene in Lesotho's politics to help the regime to defeat the opposition by the Basotho!

In January 1974 there were several outbreaks of violence between Jonathan's forces and groups of the opposition, resulting in hundreds of deaths and the flight of almost all the leadership of the B.C.P. into exile. Predictably many fell into the hands of the South Africans, but when the Leabua regime asked for their return for "punishment", Vorster allowed these "criminals" to flee further afield. This resulted in further alienation between sponsor and protege and the Leabua regime became more vocal against South Africa (including the hosting in 1978 of a conference where even the A.N.C. took part to denounce Vorster's regime from Lesotho soil).

2. It is incorrect to say, as Mr Mosotho does, that besides the engagement in agriculture there are only "a few small diamond mining enterprises". Firms such as Anglo-American do not engage in

small diamond mining operations in Lesotho — the investment in the very first stage of the Letseng-la-Terai operation was put at R23 million.

Mr Mosotho's statement conceals the extent of the capitalist and foreign exploitation of Lesotho's small known resources. I wonder if he has been away from the country so long that he knows nothing of industrial operations like tyre-retreading, ceramics, pottery, candle-making, fertiliser-mixing, weaving and others. That these are small-scale or could be more to the advantage of the Basotho than they are now is no reason to deny their existence.

3. It is false to state that "officially there is only the ruling, petty-bourgeois National Party, though no other parties, except the Communists, are banned . . ." The Communist Party has been banned since 1970; at least five political parties exist in Lesotho, and all the legally allowed parties can and do operate and hold public meetings etc. What makes their activities almost ineffective is the repressive system of permits and disallowances.

Our party is called the Basutoland Congress Party, not Basotho Congress Party. Mr Mosotho says: "The main opposition party, the Basotho Congress Party, is likewise petty-bourgeois in its composition." Either he does not know what petty-bourgeois means or he does not know how the B.C.P. is built up. This party forms the main opposition in an agricultural country. The membership is over 90% peasant, with a sprinkling of small distributive traders, intellectuals and other social strata. The majority of migrant workers who go to and from South Africa as cheap labour on the mines and farms belong to this party. All these compose the body of the B.C.P. and helped in the 1970 elections to win 46 seats out of a possible 60 in the National Assembly, with one seat to the Marema-Tlou Freedom Party, while Mr Mosotho's own party lost all the election deposits.

It is also wrong to say the Marema-Tlou Freedom Party is a party of the king's feudal supporters. The support for this party is non-existent when compared to the B.C.P., and dwindling vis-a-vis the Leabua Party, but with all respect to Mr Mosotho the M.F.P. is a party to be reckoned with.

4. Mr Mosotho says: "The existence of two competing petty-bourgeois parties is attributable, I think, not to political factors but to personal rivalries, for both follow more or less identical policies

and, of course, have identical class aims". This is arrant nonsense. The armchair revolutionaries shout abuse at the real actors who will bring about the revolution in Lesotho and free the people from the exploiters and oppressors.

5. The B.C.P. is not petty-bourgeois either in composition or leadership. There certainly are elements in the leadership who are bourgeois-minded, be they intellectuals, small traders, peasants, students or whatever, who would hijack it, if allowed, back into the capitalist camp, but to say the leadership as a whole is petty-bourgeois is incorrect. We of the B.C.P. will not agree to see the class question in such artificial terms that we exclude from the struggle for total freedom in Lesotho people simply because they keep shops, teach in schools, work in the civil service etc. We shall judge both the membership and the elected leadership by the way they think and act.

6. It is wrong to say "the petty-bourgeoisie is the second biggest (after the peasantry) population group". The second biggest population group is not the petty-bourgeoisie but the workers and employees who receive salaries and wages for their labour.

(This letter has been shortened — Ed.)

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## THE MULDERGATE SCANDAL

From S.A.B, Berlin:

In the editorial notes of the A C issue No. 76 I fully agree with your comment that all the hullabaloo about the "Muldergate Scandal" is an attempt to cover up the affair and not to expose it. For this a few heads have to be sacrificed on the altar of super profits for the multinational monopolies and their South African partners which come from the dispossession and enslavement of the black majority in our beloved country

The "Muldergate Scandal" is simply not just a matter of "corruption in high places" as the western media would have us believe. The whole affair shows the deep crisis in which the South African state finds itself as a result of the changes in the balance of forces in favour of our liberation movement and the evergrowing international isolation of the apartheid fascists. In general it typifies the apartheid crime and in particular it reveals the Mafia-gangster type of structure of the National Party which is welded into the operation of the state machine.

Detentions without trial, the tortures and murders of our beloved and heroic freedom fighters in detention, the mass shootings of unarmed children, women and men in Soweto and elsewhere, the bannings, banishments, mass removals, forced labour and full jails are all part and parcel of the "Muldergate Scandal". In the apartheid state the real law is the rule of the gun, the dagger, the whip, the boot, the club and the lie. Indeed this has been the philosophy of the apartheid fascists and their National Party ever since the thirties.

For us the "Muldergate Scandal" means continuing and intensifying our armed liberation struggle, headed by the African National Congress, for a seizure of power by the people. That means the complete destruction of all the power organs of the gangster-aggressor-apartheid state and the creation of a new state and new organs of peoples' state power. The creation of our new state also means the breaking of the chains of imperialist economic domination and opening the way for advance to social liberation. Our new state will be based on peoples' law geared to the ever raising of the living, cultural and spiritual standards of all. We will create a state in which it will be impossible for fascist-gangsters to take power. A state which will completely uproot the fundamental causes in which the rule of the gun, the dagger, the whip, the boot, the club and the lie germinate.

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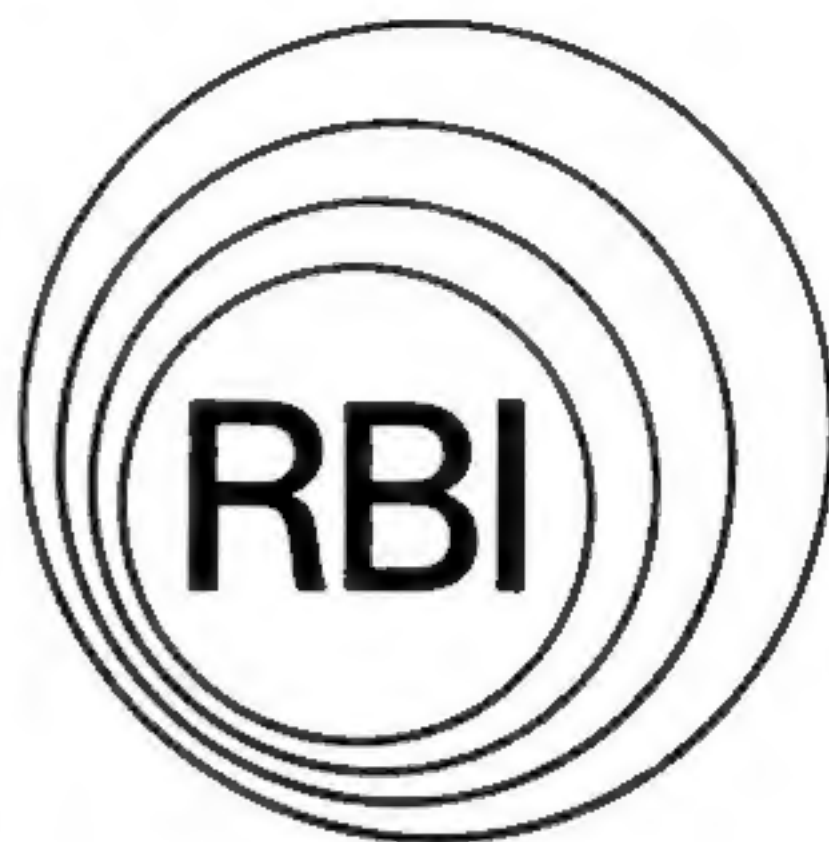
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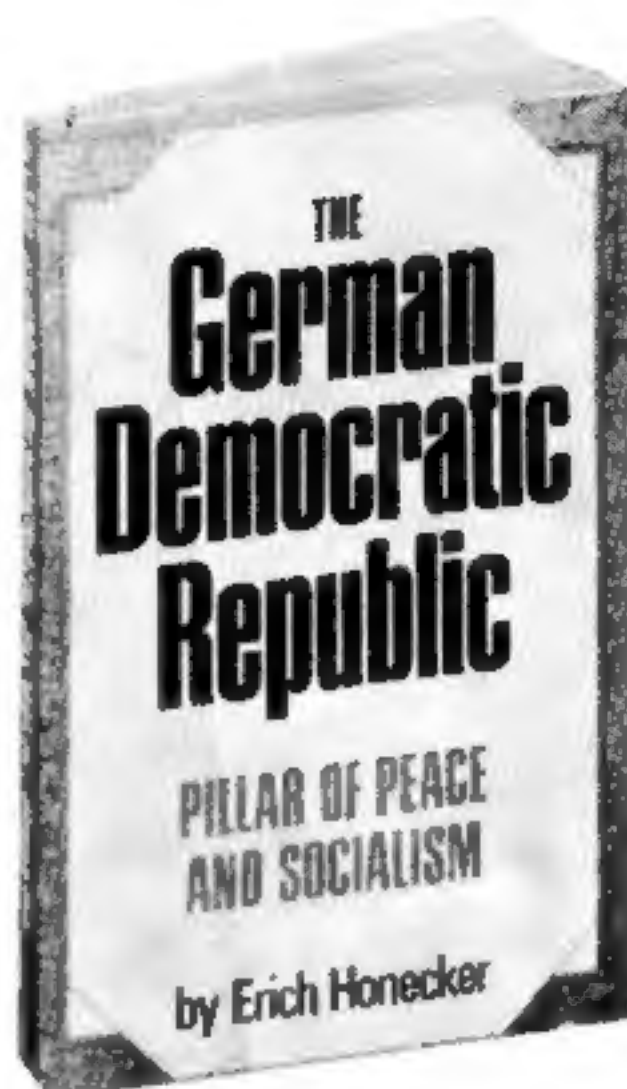
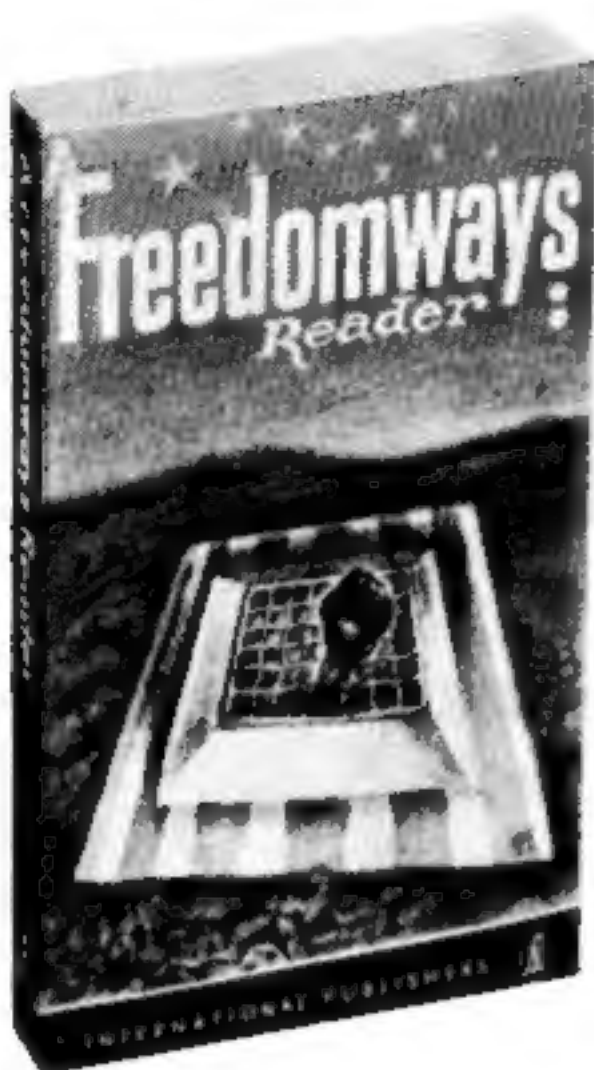
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